

PRUB and OpenStrategies

Strategic thinking & integrated strategy system



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Background

If you work with strategies, especially in the public sector, you almost certainly work in a complex strategy environment.

You may be required to create or implement a strategy or plan:

- for a single project
- for a group of projects
- for your department
- for your organisation
- for multi-stakeholder groups of 100 or more organisations representing 10s or 100s of thousands of citizens eg a Sustainable Community Strategy
- for a small area such as a neighbourhood
- for a geographically large area such as a county or region
- on a single theme such as cycling
- on a complex theme such as climate change
- for a “cross-cutting” theme such as the transportation impacts of new housing developments
- for complex demographic groups such as children and young people

As you create and implement your strategies and plans, you will take into account many other strategies such as central government strategies, regional strategies, thematic strategies, demographic strategies and organisational strategies.

You probably have to work with combinations of all of the above strategies and plans because many local authorities either have, or are impacted by 20-100 or more strategies and plans.

Almost every strategy will be written using different language and structures.

With few exceptions there will be minimal effective integration between these many strategies.

How on earth do you manage all this????

People repeatedly tell us that less than 10% of strategies make any difference on their own, let alone through their integration with other strategies.

A rough estimate of the cost of developing strategies in just the UK local government sector indicates that at least £100 million (and probably much more) is spent every year developing strategies and plans – a huge amount of money, especially if only 10% of these strategies make any difference.

There must be a better way to create, integrate and implement strategies and plans.

The OpenStrategy team works with people like you, people who are committed to making a difference in this world but who are perpetually frustrated by the plethora of plans, strategies, different formats, different strategy jargon, mind-leak workshops, discussions, forums, conferences, break-out groups, reports, thought-pieces, meetings, minutes, agendas, briefing papers, reports,

There must be a better way to create, integrate and implement strategies and plans

Collectively we've recognised that it's essential to simplify and standardise strategising and planning so that:

- we all talk the same strategy/planning language...
- to help us share strategic ideas....
- so we can collaboratively create strategies....
- which enable the integration of ideas across organisations, demographic groups, themes and geographies....
- which makes it easier to implement plans and strategies....
- leading to better outcomes at lower cost

We need a system which:

- works for single projects, and
- can be expanded seamlessly through organisational or thematic strategies, and
- scales all the way up to multi-level strategies on hugely complex themes like climate change involving 100s of stakeholder organisations and millions of stakeholders

OpenStrategy can do all the above

This booklet outlines how OpenStrategy enables effective strategy development by:

- describing the challenges facing strategy development and implementation
- providing basic information on PRUB-Strategic-Thinking building blocks
- outlining how to create SubStrategies and OpenStrategies using PRUB
- describing strategy diagnostic tools
- showing how it all fits together

This booklet is an *introduction* to PRUB-Strategic-Thinking and OpenStrategy – it's a “taster” which lightly touches on just the key PRUB and OpenStrategy concepts either in the main text or in the appendices. While PRUB and OpenStrategy are fundamentally very simple concepts, the philosophical, psychological and practical implications arising from this simplicity are surprisingly profound. Importantly, the *application* of these concepts brings practical Benefits in the real world – and you can start *now*.

For more information, just send an email to info@openstrategies.com and we'll reply promptly.

The complex world of Strategy Environments

Almost everyone's **Strategy Environment** is highly complex. Some of this complexity comes from:

- Multiple levels of strategies (national, regional, local)
- Multiple demographics characterised in many ways (age bands, healthy/sick, male/female, obese/non-obese, smokers/non-smokers, employed/unemployed, skilled/unskilled...)
- Multiple geographic regions characterised in many ways (urban/rural, different geographical districts for police/NHS/education/local authorities, flat/hilly, dry/wet)
- Multiple overlapping themes and sub-themes (drugs and alcohol, health, teenage pregnancy, education, transport, environment, waste, energy, climate change, economic development...)
- Multiple organisations and other stakeholders (local authorities, police, NHS, schools and universities, third sector, industry and commerce, citizens, interest groups...)
- Multiple reporting and accountability requirements (to stakeholders, citizens, Audit Commission, central government, interest groups, media...)
- With most of the above evolving constantly
- And with most of the above activities being described using different language and different formats in each strategy document

Is it any wonder that strategists feel overwhelmed when they try to make sense of their **Strategy Environment**?

Some examples:

We've worked with strategists who are managing such complex situations as:

- a series of strategies corresponding to:
 - the high level national aspirations of a central government agency
 - the corresponding regional aspirations
 - the corresponding local aspirations
 - the corresponding local implementation plans
- a series of strategies relating to:
 - the demographic of “Children and Young People”
 - in a large UK county
 - addressing many of the common young peoples’ themes eg drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy, physical and emotional health, sport and recreation
 - with over 80 stakeholder organisations with often conflicting agendas, differing jurisdictions and operating under a huge range of legislation
- a series of strategies corresponding to:
 - the demographic of “everyone”
 - in the geographic area of a city-region
 - focusing on healthy eating
 - with at least 50 stakeholder organisations (food producers, restaurants, supermarkets, farmers markets, school lunch providers, hospital catering departments, dieticians, medical professionals, citizens’ groups etc)

- a series of strategies relating to:
 - regional water management
 - with 8 major river catchments
 - with many demands for water (irrigation, industry, canoeing, fishing, natural habitat preservation, native flora and fauna, waste disposal etc)
 - over 100 key stakeholder organisations with strongly conflicting agendas
- a series of strategies relating to:
 - use of coastal marine water space
 - with many conflicting demands (aquaculture, sailing, fishing, biodiversity conservation, navigation, visual and other environmental requirements)
 - with many alternative approaches (zoning, regulation, collaboration, competition, sharing etc)
 - 100s of stakeholder organisations
- every local authority in the UK and New Zealand (over 450 in total) must collaboratively develop a Sustainable Community Strategy and typically needs to work with 50-200 stakeholder organisations (and requiring widespread consultation with the public) to create a strategy which will impact on anywhere from 30,000 to 1 million citizens.

These are all hugely challenging situations for anyone to ‘make sense of’, yet such situations are a fundamental part of our lives.

Complex **Strategy Environments** are everywhere, we can’t avoid them, and for the sake of our communities, we *have* to find ways of managing them better.

Principles of PRUB

We need a simple strategy and planning language

Have you heard the phrase “I do high level strategy, I don’t do details” and have you wondered if this is a cop-out... ? Have you read “high level” strategy documents and concluded that they are no more than motherhood and apple pie? (and concluded that *anyone* could write such documents and that it’s working out the details that requires the hard work and an ability to handle complexity).

Have you tried to work with a “high level strategy” to get into the detail of *exactly* what needs to be done to implement a strategy and then backed off because it became overwhelmingly complicated?

Have you been completely overwhelmed by huge amounts of data and information coming in from many sources in dozens of different formats and magnitudes?

How can we possibly communicate effectively if we use all these typical “strategy” words?

Projects, outputs, results, outcomes, themes, topics, high-level, low-level, generic, specific, measures, targets, missions, visions, schemes, cross-cutting themes, strategies, plans, platforms, collaboration, cooperation, competition, goals, objectives, frameworks, aspirations, values, structures, KPIs, performance indicators, tasks, accountabilities, responsibilities, tactics, strands, action plans, criteria, parameters, directions, issues, factors, priorities, principles, benefits, impacts, purpose, roles, capacity, capabilities, responsibility, expertise, resources, constraints, opportunities, boundaries, requirements, drivers for change, forecasts, data, information, knowledge, wisdom and... maybe one day.... implementation....

It’s even worse than merely this plethora of words...

There is little consensus on the meanings of these words.

Ask any group of people what the word “outcomes” means and you’ll get many different answers. Surely the primary reason for creating strategies is to guide the creation of outcomes – yet if people aren’t in agreement about what an outcome is, how can strategies be effective?

Try finding a common understanding of “frameworks, structures, outputs, tactics, strategies...”

If we’re going to work collaboratively then we have to all speak the same language.

This applies to the language of strategies and plans.

Our solution was to identify:

The smallest amount of strategic information....
...that has the highest value...
... to the most people

We created it - it’s called PRUB.

Explaining PRUB: the simplest strategy building block

So what is PRUB?

PRUB is an acronym for the language that simplifies the complexity of strategic planning. PRUB has its own, rigorous vocabulary, grammar and rules.

Starting with the fundamental concept:

PRUB = Organisations run Projects that produce Results that communities/citizens Use to create Benefits for themselves.

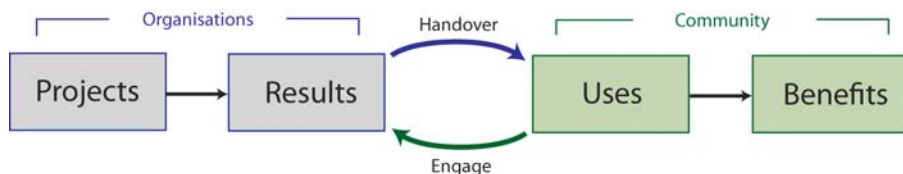


Diagram 1: The core PRUB strategy building block.

Projects: *Organisations* run **Projects** such as building a new local market, developing a communications campaign, developing health services, planting flaxes and trees around a wetland or building an irrigation scheme and filling it with water.

Results: *Organisations* produce **Results** from these Projects such as a new local market, a communication campaign, a new health service, a restored wetland, or water being available to farmers.

Uses: *The community* **Uses** these Results, e.g. by purchasing produce from a local market, reading the information from a communications campaign, receiving service at a hospital, people enjoying studying flora and fauna in the wetland, or farmers using water for irrigation.

Benefits: *The community* creates **Benefits** from their use of the things that organisations produce, such as healthier citizens due to eating healthier local produce, more engaged citizens, healthier citizens as a result of receiving more effective medical care, people having a sense of oneness with nature through their experiences in the wetlands, or farms being sustainably profitable.

Using PRUB produces
the smallest amount of strategic information
that has the highest value to the most people

Every strategic idea can be described using PRUB
either as a single P-R-U-B or as
combinations of multiple Ps Rs Us and Bs.

Any less information than that encapsulated in PRUB is insufficient for effective strategy development and implementation.

PRUB is the absolute minimum set of strategic information.

All other strategic information *contributes to* PRUB – but PRUB itself is “the strategy”.

Here is a couple of very simple example PRUBs for single Projects:

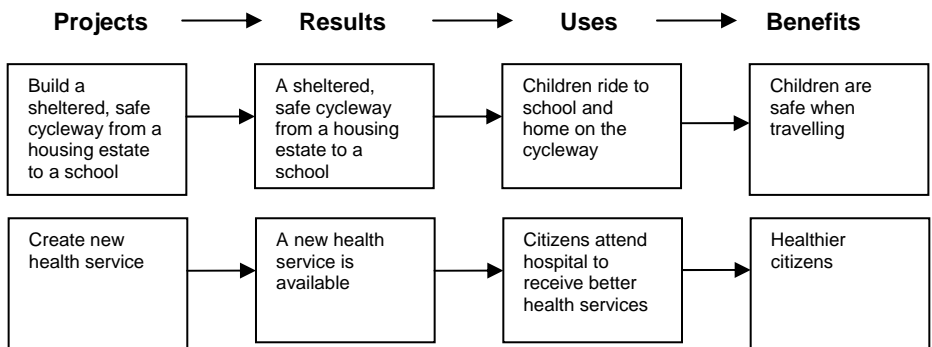


Diagram 2: Simple example PRUBs for two Projects.

PRUB is fundamental to the OpenStrategy system (see below).

PRUB is the core strategy building block.

Using PRUB it's possible to create strategies for everything from single projects right up to multi-level, multi-stakeholder, multi-theme OpenStrategies.

A Strategy based on PRUB-Strategic-Thinking (eg an OpenStrategy) will be concise, clear and implementable.

PRUB is the absolute minimalist set of strategic information. It is the core strategy building block.

After a quick glance at OpenStrategy, some people say:

- “PRUB and OpenStrategy are too complex”

Others say:

- “PRUB and OpenStrategy are too simplistic”

As you read this booklet, you might like to ponder on the above two statements and keep the following statements and questions in the back of your mind:

1. PRUB is the smallest amount of strategic information that has the highest value to the most people
2. if PRUB is too complex, which bits would you like to leave out?
3. if PRUB is too simplistic, which other pieces of information would you like to add and which are as important as Projects, Results, Uses, Benefits and supporting OpenStrategy concepts of “Links” and “Evidence?”
4. so if you want a succinct, implementable strategy (where, by “implementable”, we mean the full sequence from Projects through to Benefits”) then use PRUB/OpenStrategy
 - a. anything simpler will be too vague to implement
 - b. anything more complex will be... more complex

Who are the PRUB stakeholders? Organisations and communities

Organisations undertake Projects to produce Results (organisational action followed by organisational output). Almost without exception, the role of organisations is to *create assets* (note that on occasions, citizens also perform this role).

Communities undertake Uses to produce Benefits (community action followed by community outcome). In this case, communities play the role of *Users* of assets (or consumers of assets).

Organisations produce Results, not Benefits.

Projects must necessarily be linked through Results and Uses in order to lead to Benefits.

There are no short-cuts from Projects to Benefits, or from Results to Benefits – every Project MUST link via Results through Uses to Benefits

Only communities produce Benefits

Therefore provider organisations must create the *right* Results in order for communities to (usually voluntarily) Use these Results to create Benefits.

As discussed in more detail under “Do organisations deliver outcomes/Benefits” below, these Results need to be “handed over” or “made available to” communities, *not delivered to or at them!*

A couple of key comparisons with traditional strategy language

In traditional strategy language, what we define as “Results” are often known as outputs. In the PRUB taxonomy, Results are *desired* outputs and are always worded positively.

Similarly in traditional strategy language, Benefits are often known as outcomes. In the PRUB taxonomy, Benefits are *desired* outcomes and are always worded positively.

In the PRUB taxonomy, we use upper case first letters for Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits to signify that we are referring to the exact use of these words according to the PRUB taxonomy and definitions (see the glossary in Appendix 1)

Links

In a PRUB, “linked” means “contributes to...”, or “increases the likelihood that...”

For example, a Project “Build a cycleway” naturally Links to the Result “A cycleway”. Similarly a Project “Undertake and document research on....” naturally Links positively to a Result “A report on ...”.

Another example could be a Result “Qualified staff are available to counsel young people” which increases the likelihood of a Use that “young people attend a youth centre and receive counselling”.

Sometimes a P, R or U increases the likelihood of something negative happening, eg a Use of “chopping down native trees” would have a negative Link to a Benefit defined as “a healthy native forest” while simultaneously contributing positively to a potential Benefit of “improved profit for timber a company”.

So if a Use has a negative impact (leads to a negative outcome), then PRUB-rules capture this in a “negative Link” from the Use to a positive Benefit/outcome – ie negativity is captured in Links rather than in PRUBs.

PRUB or BURP?

Your strategising will be enhanced by first identifying and describing desired outcomes or Benefits and then determining what needs to be done to create these Benefits.

This works well with PRUB – just run it backwards: ie BURP:

1. define the desired Benefits, then
2. work out what communities need to do (Uses) to create these Benefits, then
3. work out what Results communities need in order to do these Uses, then
4. work out what Projects are required to create these Results

The beauty of this approach is that you can:

1. Use BURP to create a strategy and then
2. Use PRUB to implement it

So BURP/PRUB is simultaneously a strategy and an action plan

Introduction to SubStrategies

Generally several Projects are required to produce a set of Results (outputs) which collectively are Used by communities to create one or more Benefits (outcomes) for themselves.

A related set of Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits is called a **SubStrategy** – it's the next level of building block above a simple PRUB.

If every Project is described in terms of PRUB, then:

- a small collection of PRUBs = a SubStrategy
- a collection of SubStrategies = an OpenStrategy

We've found that everything organisations do, and how communities use and benefit from the results of what organisations do, can all be accommodated within a SubStrategy – *without exception*

PRUB strategic thinking has been tested in many situations and a complete, integrated OpenStrategy system has now been built on PRUB.

So PRUB provides an essential core strategy language that enables the collaborative development of large scale strategies.

PRUB is conceptually simple and it's powerful.

However, just as the concept of playing a piano is simple (ie hit the black and white keys) it requires training and practice to effectively create and implement strategies (or play Beethoven well).

In this respect, not everyone needs to become a PRUB-guru (just as not everyone needs to become a concert pianist) but there is a minimum level of PRUB-understanding that's required to fully appreciate PRUB-Strategic Thinking when engaging with a PRUB-specialist (like a minimum knowledge of music to really appreciate listening to Beethoven) .

Everything organisations do, and how communities use and benefit from the results of what organisations do, can all be accommodated within a SubStrategy – *without exception*

We therefore recommend that people think carefully about what level of PRUB-strategic-thinker skill they need, perhaps:

- just enough training to understand the principles of PRUB, to understand and use SubStrategies created by other people and perhaps create some small SubStrategies (PRUB-Basic training will be enough)
- enough training to create larger and more complex SubStrategies and use the PRUB-Validate web-tools (PRUB-Thinker training)
- enough training to create SubStrategies and OpenStrategies on large-scale and complex themes and to guide others to create SubStrategies (Accredited Practitioner and/or facilitator training)

Please contact info@openstrategies.com for details about PRUB and OpenStrategy training.

What BURP/PRUB help you achieve

- BURP creates strategies
- PRUB drives implementation

When strategies are created using BURP/PRUB-Strategic-Thinking then they:

- can be “Validated” (see “Introduction to PRUB-Validate” later in this booklet)
- can be directly implemented, because Projects (actions) are explicitly defined
- save money by explicitly identifying those Projects/actions which do not lead to Benefits and hence such Projects should be stopped
- demonstrate explicitly how Projects (inputs) contribute ultimately via Results and Uses to Benefits (outcomes)
- confirm that there are no shortcuts between Projects and Benefits – Users *have* to be engaged to create Benefits
- identify where it’s most important to have convincing evidence to justify Projects and SubStrategies
- can be aggregated, disaggregated and re-aggregated into different combinations and sizes to create strategies on chosen themes or demographic or geographic groups using the same PRUB strategic building blocks
- enable the interlinking of national, regional and local strategies while preserving the integrity of each SubStrategy
- show simply and transparently what sub-groups are doing, thereby assisting collaboration
- evolve fluidly over time
- enable effective communications because all stakeholders use the same PRUB strategy language

Revisiting the crucially important question: “Do organisations ‘deliver’ outcomes/Benefits?”

This question and its answer are critically important!

If organisations run Projects to create the right Results and make them readily available, then there is a good chance that citizens and communities will indeed create worthwhile Benefits/outcomes by Using these Results. In this way, organisations such as public sector organisations can definitely *ensure or deliver* Results/outputs and *influence* Benefits/outcomes – but *they cannot ensure/deliver/create/produce Benefits/outcomes*.

Provider organisations can deliver Results, and they can ensure that services are made available but it's only when these Results and services are Used by citizens and communities that “outcomes are ensured”.

Very often, such Uses are voluntary – communities seldom *have* to use the Results created by organisations. Therefore in order to achieve high levels of Use and their subsequent Benefits/outcomes, the *Results must be wanted* by communities.

So Uses are absolutely fundamental components of any strategy

Precisely understanding Uses is perhaps
the most important component of every strategy

Sadly, the majority of public sector strategies we've encountered make minimal or no references to Uses. They make claims that Projects will create Benefits, and the crucial role of Users as the creators of Benefits is seldom acknowledged. This would be like a commercial business creating a strategy without understanding customer behaviour – it's unthinkable that a company would do this because understanding customers is crucial to business success.

Surely.... **public service** organisations need to similarly understand and respond directly to the needs of the “public” to whom they provide services (and who pays for these services via taxes).

So prior to undertaking a Project to produce a Result, it is essential to engage with Users/communities to secure:

- sufficient evidence that the community will actually Use the proposed Results
- sufficient evidence that this Use will create Benefits of sufficient value to justify the costs of the Project

PRUB explicitly demonstrates that:

Provider organisations do not *deliver* or *ensure* Benefits

PRUB therefore challenges head-on such popular public sector concepts as the “delivery” or “provision” of public services and “ensuring outcomes” and replaces them with the concept of communities *coming and using* public services to create Benefits for themselves

So instead of “organisations delivering or ensuring Benefits”,
what actually happens is that
“communities *come and use* public services
to create Benefits for themselves”

Understanding that organisations cannot “deliver” or “provide”
services to “ensure outcomes/Benefits” and that
only Users can “ensure outcomes/Benefits”
is profoundly challenging yet frequently liberating and
empowering

PRUB and the powerful concept of “Orphan Results”

PRUB-strategic-thinking explicitly identifies wasteful Projects that are producing Results that aren't being, or won't be Used. Therefore “PRUBing a Project” can save money by identifying and stopping such wasteful Projects.

As shown in Diagram 3, Projects which produce Results which cannot be, or are not, or won't be Used by communities or citizens are termed “Orphan Results” because they have been lovingly created (given birth to) by someone or some organisation, but the community can't/won't Use them.

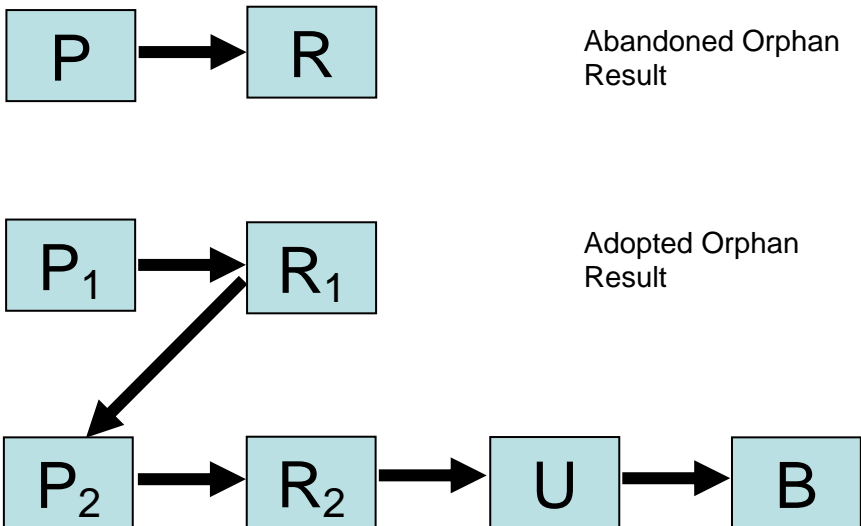


Diagram 3: PRUB diagram showing the production of two types of Orphan Result

There are two main types of Orphan Results:

- **Abandoned Orphan Results:** Orphan Results which cannot be Used by Community/Citizens and also cannot be used by other organisations.
 - We call these “*Abandoned Orphan Results*” (eg “R” in Diagram 4)
 - The corresponding Projects should either be modified so they create Useful or Adoptable Results or they should be stopped and money saved

- **Adopted Orphan Results:** Orphan Results which cannot be used by Communities/Citizens but which can be *adopted and used* by other organisations that in turn create Results which can be Used by communities.
 - We call these “*Adopted Orphan Results*” (eg R1 in diagram 4)

Example Abandoned Orphan Result:

a report sent to central government which sits unread in a filing cabinet.

Example Adopted Orphan Result

a research Project P1 which produces a scientific paper as Result R1 which can then be used by a second organisation to guide the construction (P2) of a swimming pool R2 which citizens *can* Use.

We believe it is essential that:

for every Project it is incumbent upon the person who started the Project and created the Result (the Project leader) to demonstrate rigorously that Users will Use the Result to create Benefits, or find someone to adopt the Result.

Therefore *before* a Project starts, the project leader should be *responsible and held accountable* for finding either a community to *Use* the Result or an organisation to *Adopt* the Result. If neither of these can be identified and evidence secured that they genuinely will Use or Adopt the Result, then the Project should not start.

Alarming frequently, organisations/Project leaders produce Abandoned Orphan Results and then simply walk away from them saying it's someone else's responsibility to work out what to do with the Result. What a sad waste of resources.

Projects should not be started until there is clear and compelling evidence that either:

- the Result will be Used to create Benefits, or
- there is someone willing to adopt (and ideally pay for) and use the Orphan Result

Based on extensive discussions with many people in the UK and NZ public sectors, we estimate that savings of more than 10% could be achieved immediately in many public sector organisations simply by withdrawing funding from Projects which are producing Abandoned Orphan Results.

How does PRUB fit together with other strategic information?

This section gives more detail on how PRUB-Strategic-Thinking is unique because it provides the most valuable core set of information that is essential for every strategy.

Is PRUB just another flavour-of-the-month strategy tool or is it unique?

One of Julius Caesar's generals is reported to have said "if in doubt, restructure, it gives the impression of progress".

A modern equivalent is "if in doubt, create another strategy, it gives the impression of progress" (and/or "if in doubt, run a pilot, it also gives the impression of progress").

Experience suggests that over 90% of strategies (and pilots) make no difference.

So why are we discussing creating yet more strategies?

Because OpenStrategy does it differently:

1. OpenStrategy is based on PRUB: the smallest amount of strategic information that has the highest value to the most stakeholders
2. PRUB requires a logical sequence from organisational Projects through to Community Benefits and demands the smallest amount of the most important evidence of this logical sequence
 - Projects
 - Results
 - Uses
 - Benefits
 - Links
 - Evidence for Links, costs and the value of Benefits
3. Using just the above information, PRUB-Validate and the OpenStrategy Diagnostic provide profound guidance for the development of implementable and worthwhile strategies
4. On the one hand, OpenStrategy uses the fact that most stakeholders are prepared to put energy into creating single, good SubStrategies, and few stakeholders will do more than this – it's crucial to recognise this constraint – and it's not a problem when using OpenStrategy and PRUB
5. On the other hand, a tiny percentage of stakeholders (integrators) need and are motivated to understand a full strategy or OpenStrategy which they can accumulate from many individual SubStrategies

Most strategy documents contain a large amount of information which *contributes to the strategy* but which *is not the strategy itself*. Typical of such information is demographic data, “drivers for change”, economic constraints, environmental factors, legislation, political persuasions and so on.

Diagram 4 shows that PRUB forms the *core* for any strategy, with all other information *contributing to the strategy* but *not itself constituting the strategy*.

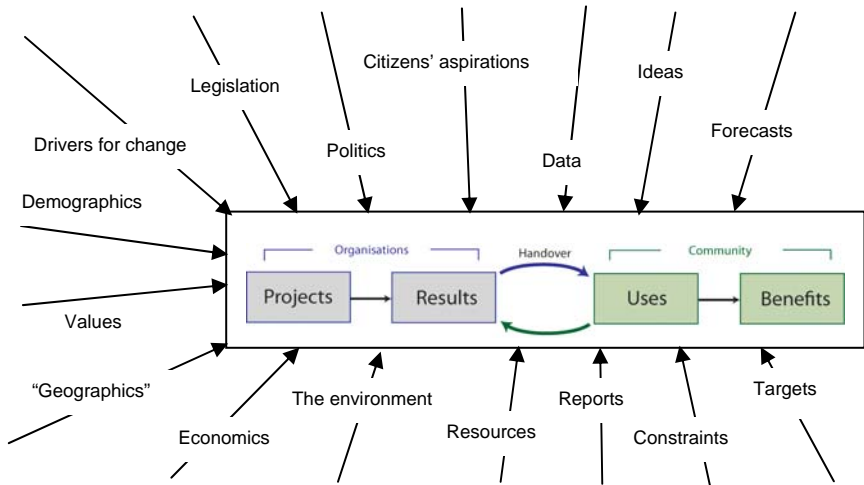
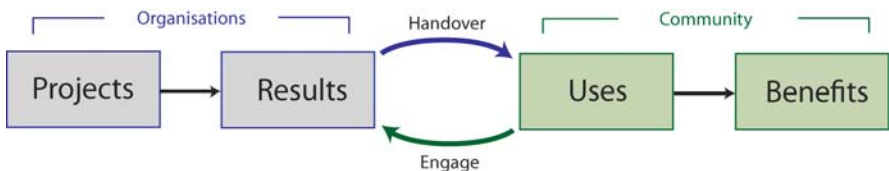


Diagram 4: PRUB: the core information of any strategy showing that other information contributes to the PRUB strategy core

While a strategy document may reasonably contain information on drivers for change, demographics, economics, constraints, political perspectives and so on, these types of information are *contributors to a strategy* – but they aren't *the strategy*.

As Mintzberg^{1,2} says, “a strategy is a plan”. A strategy is all about what needs to be done given the current and forecast circumstances – it's about actions/plans (Projects), backed up by reasons for taking those actions (partially summarised in PRUB as Benefits).

After thousands of hours of research and discussions with hundreds of public, private and third sector people, we're convinced that Mintzberg's “what needs to be done” is best represented by PRUB:



PRUB must be the core of every strategy

Why? Because:

- it consists of the smallest and most concise set of implementable strategic information
- that has the highest strategic value
- to the most people

PRUB must be the core of every strategy

1. Henry Mintzberg, "Five Ps for Strategy" in The Strategy Process, pp 12-19, H Mintzberg and JB Quinn eds., 1992, Prentice-Hall International Editions, Englewood Cliffs NJ.
2. <http://www.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/dstools/paradigm/5pstrat.html>

Every other piece of other information as shown in Diagram 4 is important in its own specific way for informing and guiding a strategy, but when all such information has been collected, collated, analysed, tested, brainstormed, mind-mapped, debated, refined, understood and finally agreed.... it still isn't a strategy!!!

PRUB is "what needs to be done":

by organisations (PR)

and communities (UB)

For example, "drivers for change" are not strategy – they *impact on* strategy.

It's still just data, or information, or knowledge, or wisdom.... it still isn't a strategy.

It still isn't Mintzberg's "what needs to be done"

So when all the information analysis has been completed, action needs to be taken which reflects all this information.

PRUB is "what needs to be done" by organisations (PR) and communities (UB)

Similarly, demographics, geographic factors, themes, economic constraints, legislation, and political perspectives all *impact on* strategy – they are not strategy – PRUB is strategy.

Certainly there is other very important information that should be part of a strategy or action plan eg:

1. precisely who is responsible for a Project or SubStrategy
2. exactly who the community (users) is
3. what resources are required and what are available to support a Project (such as cash, people, infrastructure etc)
4. start and finish dates for a Project
5. more detailed information about each Project, Result, Use and Benefit than can fit in the PRUB boxes
6. performance measures (such as the number of people using a swimming pool)

Important as this information is, it is of secondary importance to the core PRUB information – indeed it *fits within* each PRUB item.

PRUB is the most succinct, widely understandable and valuable strategic planning framework to provide the core of all strategies

Aggregating and disaggregating SubStrategies

Few strategic activities can be usefully described with a single Linked sequence made up of a single Project, a single Result, a single Use and a single Benefit.

Typically a number of Projects are required to produce several Results which may have one or more Uses to achieve one or more related Benefits. For example, a swimming pool on its own isn't sufficient to enable children to swim and get fit. There is also a need (amongst other things) for car parking as well as a range of swimming training and 'poolfun' programmes to encourage young people to use the swimming pool.

This simplistic example has been portrayed in Diagram 5 as a SubStrategy using PRUB:

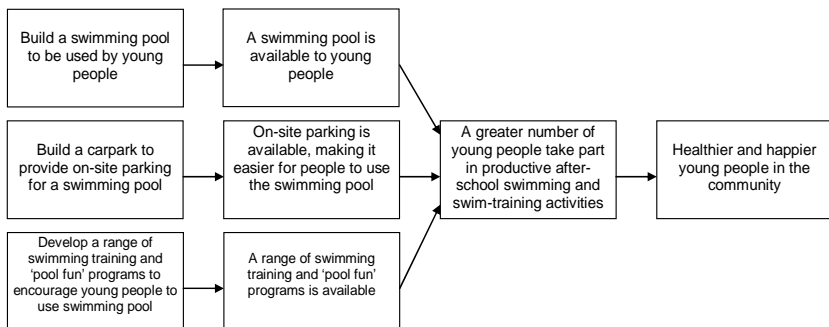


Diagram 5: A simple SubStrategy focusing on the Use: “young people swimming”

Probably the three Projects shown in diagram 5 are still not enough to enable the Use. Other Results that are likely to be required include: trained lifeguards, safety equipment, buses to the swimming pool, cycle routes to the swimming pool, secure cycle parks, promotional campaigns and so on.

A SubStrategy it therefore a tidy and effective way of displaying all the Projects and Results that are both necessary and sufficient to enable a Use to happen

Diagram 6 shows a modest sized SubStrategy created by aggregating several Single SubStrategies on the topics of:

- Building a new health centre
- A campaign to promote the new health centre
- Development of after schools programmes
- Building and staffing a youth suicide call centre

This is typical of the manner in which single SubStrategies can be aggregated into a large thematic SubStrategy while simultaneously:

- retaining the distinctness of each SubStrategy
- inter-linking the SubStrategies

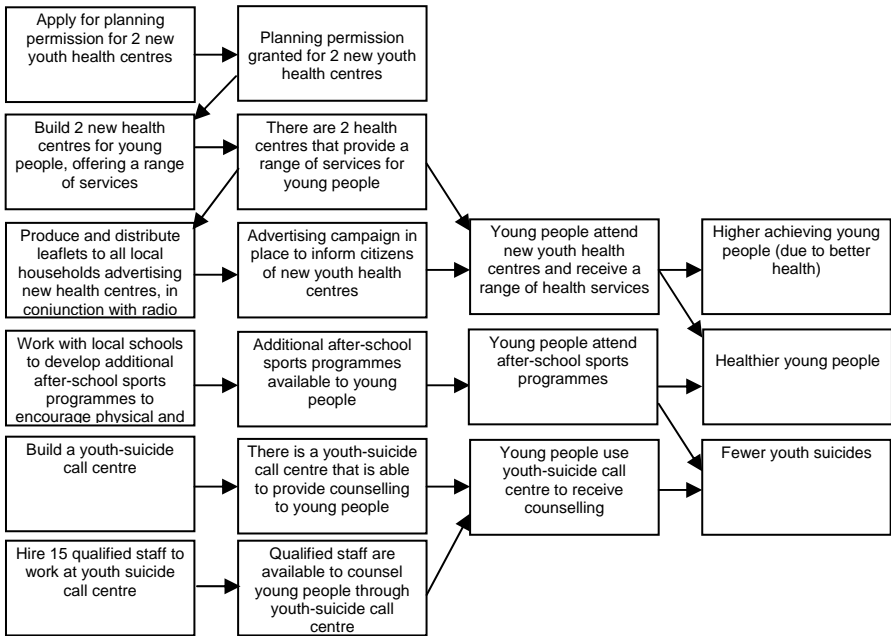


Diagram 6: An example of a modest sized SubStrategy relating to aspects of children's health

Diagram 7 below similarly shows schematically how once strategic plans have been encapsulated into SubStrategies, they can be aggregated into collections of ideas or SubStrategies to create an overall OpenStrategy.

The left hand part of Diagram 7 shows an example of a small OpenStrategy (or large SubStrategy) made up of 48 Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits together with the links between these PRUB items. Such an OpenStrategy could contain half a dozen or more SubStrategies on specific themes or demographic or geographic groupings.

The right hand part of Diagram 7 shows two thematic SubStrategies which have been distilled from this OpenStrategy.

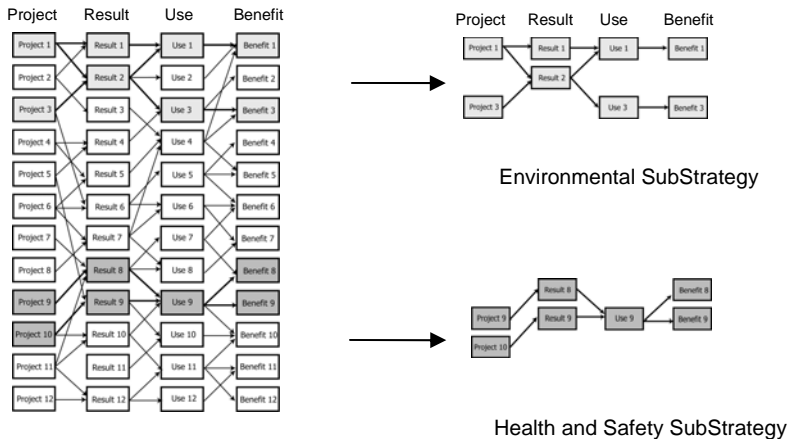


Diagram 7: PRUB diagram showing a number of PRUBs aggregated into an OpenStrategy together with two SubStrategies distilled from the OpenStrategy

By using PRUB, individual Ps Rs Us and Bs can be aggregated, disaggregated and re-aggregated easily to form new SubStrategies, eg on cross cutting themes. In the example above it would be easy to create a combined “environmental, health and safety SubStrategy” by simply combining the two distilled SubStrategies.

Similarly it would be straightforward to add “recreational” PRUBs to the Environmental SubStrategy to create an “Environmental and Recreational SubStrategy”.

So a fundamental principle of OpenStrategy is that SubStrategies can be “aggregated” into OpenStrategies.

For example:

- A Transport OpenStrategy can be an aggregation of SubStrategies on cycling, walking, horse riding, road transport, rail transport and aviation
- An Environmental OpenStrategy can be an aggregation of SubStrategies on biodiversity, trees, protected areas, recreational open spaces, cycling, walking, horse riding and waste management

As described in the bullet points above, the cycling, walking and horse riding SubStrategies can each be part of *both* a Transport OpenStrategy *and* an Environmental OpenStrategy.

An OpenStrategy based on raising children’s health through physical exercise could contain SubStrategies on a swimming pool, gymnastics, football, horse riding, cycling, rowing, kung fu and other themes.

A fundamental principle of OpenStrategy is that SubStrategies can be “aggregated” into OpenStrategies.

At the same time, the swimming pool SubStrategy could be part of an older persons’ OpenStrategy while also being part of the local authority’s Capital Works OpenStrategy.

So once all activities have been PRUB’d into SubStrategies, they can be aggregated and re-aggregated into many different OpenStrategies based on themes, demographic groupings, geographic areas or indeed any other combination of SubStrategies.

Therefore instead of an organisation needing 50 or 100 strategies they can have a single “library of SubStrategies” which can be aggregated and disaggregated into whatever OpenStrategies are desired.

A strength of the OpenStrategy approach is that the same SubStrategies can appear in multiple OpenStrategies without having to re-draft them.

SubStrategies are often created by one or a small number of stakeholders and can be identified as defining what they are doing. By encapsulating such strategies in a web-tool like OpenStrategy, all stakeholders can transparently see what others are doing and this helps facilitate better collaboration.

So PRUB strategy building blocks enable enormous flexibility in the shared, transparent development, aggregation and re-aggregation of strategy components (Ps Rs Us and Bs) to create new SubStrategies (new combinations of ideas) using the same PRUBs

Such re-aggregation enables a strategic refocusing on specific themes, demographics, geographical areas or all of the above.

Where there are multiple PRUBs, as in a SubStrategy or OpenStrategy, the sum total of the Benefits is closely related to the reasons for implementing a strategy – ie the “mission” of the stakeholder organisations and their communities.

The total set of Benefits approximates the Vision of an OpenStrategy

Generic vs specific strategies

Most strategies have minimal impact. Why?

They often have minimal impact because they simply can't be effectively implemented. Why?

Because they are too generic.

The distinction between "generic" and "specific" strategies and plans is crucial:

- generic strategies cannot be implemented directly
- only specific action plans can be implemented

There are many links in the chain from a generic strategy (e.g. a "high level" national strategy) to specific plans and implementation.

If any one of these links is broken, the strategy probably can't be directly implemented.

A quick analysis of most strategy documents will uncover many generic statements and so-called action plans – action plans which simply are not specific enough to be implemented.

To be implementable, a strategy or action plan must be:

- a. geographically specific (where are actions taking place) *and*
- b. thematically specific (on what topics) *and*
- c. organisationally specific (who are the service providers, including partnerships) *and*
- d. demographically specific (who are the users who will benefit) *and*
- e. specific in other areas as well, eg process specific (how will things be done)

The total set of
Benefits
approximates the
Vision of an
OpenStrategy

Most published strategies and action plans do not meet these specificity criteria – they are generic - they have little chance of being directly implemented. This does not necessarily mean they are a waste of time – it's just that they are *insufficient* to be implemented. What is required is the development of *specific implementable SubStrategies* guided by these generic strategies.

The OpenStrategy system guides the development and inter-linking of *both* generic and specific SubStrategies.

The intensity of stakeholder focus on SubStrategies

If there are 100 stakeholder organisations working together to create a large-scale strategy, we find that:

- perhaps 80% of stakeholders are interested almost solely in their own specific area of work, ie 80% of stakeholders are interested in just one or two SubStrategies
- perhaps 15% are interested in their own specific area of work as well as how it connects with other related areas of work ie 15% of stakeholders are interested in perhaps three to five SubStrategies
- perhaps 5% of stakeholders are interested in working with “the big picture” of the entire strategy ie 5% of stakeholders are interested in all SubStrategies

95% of stakeholders are interested in working with single or small numbers of SubStrategies and only 5% are motivated to work with (as distinct from just talk about) the big picture of strategies and OpenStrategies.

Most stakeholders will put their energy into creating and refining SubStrategies of specific interest to themselves and their own organisations.

OpenStrategy taps into this localised stakeholder focus on SubStrategies by enabling stakeholders to create their own SubStrategies and then enabling other stakeholders – who we call “integrators” – to accumulate the SubStrategies into various combinations to create and monitor larger scale OpenStrategies.

So

- most stakeholders *create and implement* SubStrategies
- integrators *accumulate and monitor* OpenStrategies

Other PRUB and OpenStrategy concepts

This brief booklet has touched just lightly on a number of aspects of PRUB and OpenStrategy. While PRUB and OpenStrategy are inherently simple concepts, they nevertheless give rise to many subtle yet powerful concepts.

Appendix 1 (Glossary of some PRUB and OpenStrategy terms) and Appendix 2 (Some further characteristics of PRUB and OpenStrategy) briefly touch on many other aspects of PRUB/OpenStrategy, eg philosophically powerful concepts such as “earning the right to lead rather than taking control” and the crucially important and powerful distinction between “joined-up resources” and “pooled resources”.

Concepts like these arise naturally from the clean simplicity of PRUB. They are subtle but they can be very powerful so it pays to understand them if working with multi-stakeholder groups. PRUB-Basic and PRUB-Thinker training provide insights into these concepts.

Creating different strategies using PRUB and OpenStrategy

So let's review the earlier list (page 3) of the different types of strategies that people are trying to create and then see how PRUB and OpenStrategy enable these strategies to be developed coherently.

In this section we will review strategy development under 4 main sub-headings:

1. **Type 1: Single SubStrategies** eg on a single narrowly defined topic such as a swimming pool, cycleway or a single health service for a very narrow demographic grouping
2. **Type 2: Simple OpenStrategies** on a single theme or geography such as recreational activities for young people in Abergavenny in which each SubStrategy is largely independent of other SubStrategies
3. **Type 3: Complex OpenStrategies** on multiple, inter-linked themes such as a Sustainable Community Strategy
4. **Type 4: Layered Complex OpenStrategies** on multiple themes and at multiple levels such as a hierarchy of housing strategies at national, regional, sub-regional and local levels

It's important to remember that all 4 of the above types of OpenStrategies are based on exactly the same PRUB-strategic-thinking structure, with the differences between the 4 types of OpenStrategies being primarily ones of scale.

In reality there are seldom clear dividing lines between the different types of strategies.

Type 1: Simple SubStrategies

A single SubStrategy focuses on a narrowly defined topic and typically consists of no more than 2-4 Projects and usually only 1 or 2 Uses. Diagrams 2 and 6 are examples of Single SubStrategies.

Most individual stakeholders are comfortable operating at this level of Single SubStrategies.

Type 2: Simple OpenStrategies

A Simple OpenStrategy consists of a number of Single SubStrategies, most of which are stand-alone SubStrategies with little or no inter-linking between the SubStrategies.

Diagram 7 is an example of a Simple OpenStrategy in which each Project produces its own Result which leads to its own Use. There is some inter-linking between the Uses and Benefits so this example is verging on being a Complex OpenStrategy.

Organisational stakeholders with departmental management responsibilities are most comfortable operating at this level of Simple OpenStrategies.

Type 3: Complex OpenStrategies

Single level Children and Young Peoples OpenStrategies, Climate Change OpenStrategies and Sustainable Community OpenStrategies are examples of Complex OpenStrategies because they contain many SubStrategies, many of which impact on each other (ie they are inter-linked).

Given that most stakeholders prefer to operate at the level of Simple SubStrategies, or at most, the level of Simple OpenStrategies, the facilitation of Complex OpenStrategies requires competent OpenStrategy facilitation skills.

Type 4: Multi-layered Complex OpenStrategies

Many **Strategy Environments** include strategies at multiple levels, eg national, regional and local strategies. Using the OpenStrategy terminology, national and regional OpenStrategies are typically “generic” and can’t be directly implemented whereas local strategies are “specific” and hence can be implemented.

When reading this section, it’s worth hanging on tightly to the fact that irrespective of how complex an OpenStrategy may appear to be, it is nevertheless simply a large collection of simple SubStrategies plus inter-linking connections.

Implementation will almost always take place at the level of Simple SubStrategies, so the integration of these SubStrategies into Multi-level Complex OpenStrategies is solely in order to gain a clear understanding of how everything fits together ie how various SubStrategies at various levels impact on each other.

By using standard SubStrategy building blocks based on PRUB together with the OpenStrategy keyword categories and keywords, it’s possible to tag and thereby inter-link SubStrategies and OpenStrategies at multiple levels.

An example might be a Multi-layered Complex OpenStrategy on housing made up of:

- a generic national housing OpenStrategy, linked to
- a number of generic regional housing OpenStrategies, linked to
- a greater number of generic sub-regional housing OpenStrategies, linked to
- an even greater number of specific housing local SubStrategies which can be directly implemented

Such a multi-level OpenStrategy can accommodate demographic, geographic, thematic, organisational and other parameters.

For example, for an overall OpenStrategy on housing, all 4 levels of the above OpenStrategy could include PRUB/SubStrategies on Social Housing and/or Sustainability Standards for housing, and/or the identification of suitable brown-fields sites and so on.

The OpenStrategy keyword system enables such multi-level strategies to be vertically and horizontally inter-linked to create an overall integrated OpenStrategy matrix.

The facilitation of Multi-layered Complex SubStrategies requires advanced OpenStrategy facilitation skills and web-tools. If you are interested in developing larger or more complex strategies, especially multi-level OpenStrategies please contact us to discuss options.

We're genuinely interested in your feedback on this booklet so would appreciate you sharing your thoughts with us by sending them to:

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OpenStrategy and PRUB tools

This section briefly describes just a couple of OpenStrategy and PRUB tools which can help diagnose existing strategies and/or create fully Validated, implementable SubStrategies and OpenStrategies.

Introduction to PRUB-Validate

Every successful activity or project should lead to Benefits that are more valuable than the costs of getting to the Benefits.

With PRUB-Validate you can explicitly determine if this is true for every Project or activity.

1. If it's true, then the Project is "PRUB-Validated" – it's worth doing - great!
2. If it's not true, then PRUB-Validate will have identified exactly why this is so and provide guidance on where action is required to change the Project or stop it and make savings

By evaluating your Projects with PRUB-Validate you will either:

- build confidence in the value of your Projects, or
- identify potential savings across an organisation of 10-20%

You can PRUB-Validate your Projects in 3 simple steps:

Step 1: PRUB-Link

The first step in PRUB-Validating a Project is to Link the Project via one or more Results and Uses to at least 1 Benefit

To be “PRUB-Linked”, a Project must either directly or indirectly produce Results that can be Used to create Benefits. Such Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits must necessarily be “specific” in order to be implementable.

Simply PRUB-Linking your Projects through Results and Uses to Benefits is a powerful first step which alone will guide improvements in strategies

If a specific Project can be at least theoretically Linked through a sequence of specific Results and specific Uses to specific Benefits then the Project is “PRUB-Linked” (but not yet PRUB-Validated)

Step 2: PRUB-Evidence

The second step is to justify the above PRUB-Link by adding “Evidence” to the claimed Links between Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits. For example, what is the Evidence that each Result will actually be Used frequently enough to Justify the Project? What is the Evidence that the anticipated Use will actually lead to the desired Benefit?

When convincing Evidence has been added for all Links, the Project is both “PRUB-Linked” and “PRUB-Evidenced” (but still not yet PRUB-Validated).

PRUB-Evidencing your PRUB-Linked Projects is a powerful second step which will guide further improvements in strategies

Step 3: PRUB-Value

The third step is to determine if the Project is leading to Benefits which are of greater value than the combined costs of the Projects and Uses ie if the Project is worth doing. Everyone (including taxpayers) wants value for money so it's reasonable to ask that each Project be PRUB-Valued.

To be PRUB-Validated your Project must be PRUB-Linked + PRUB-Evidenced + have PRUB-Value

This requires placing a value on the Benefits – a challenging but seldom impossible task - and then comparing this value with the total Project costs plus the total costs to Users when they Use the Results.

If the value of the Benefits is greater than the total costs, then the Project has “PRUB-Value”.

To be PRUB-Validated your Project must be PRUB-Linked + PRUB-Evidenced + have PRUB-Value

If a Project cannot be PRUB-Validated, it will now be clear exactly why this is so – eg perhaps it can't be Linked through to Benefits, or there is insufficient Evidence to justify the Links, or the Value of the Benefits isn't enough to justify the costs of the Project and Uses.

A key fact here is that PRUB-Validate will have clearly identified actions that can be taken to improve the Project/SubStrategy so that it does actually create valuable Benefits.

Introduction to the OpenStrategy Diagnostic

The OpenStrategy Diagnostic is similar in many ways to PRUB-Validate and is generally applicable at a more generic level or is applied to larger strategies than PRUB-Validate.

The OpenStrategy Diagnostic helps to identify and guide generic and specific components of overall strategies and if coupled with PRUB-Validate can explicitly determine which parts of strategies can be implemented.

There are many steps from a generic strategy (e.g. a “high level” national strategy) to specific plans and implementation.

If any one of these steps is incomplete, the strategy probably won't be implemented.

The OpenStrategy Diagnostic consists of a simple but rigorous series of questions based on a simple flow-chart (Diagram 8) of steps from a generic or high level strategy through generic Projects and their Orphan Results and on through specific Adopting Projects and their Useful Results to Uses which are the ultimate creators of Benefits.

If every one of these questions can be answered convincingly, then the strategy has a good chance of being implemented effectively.

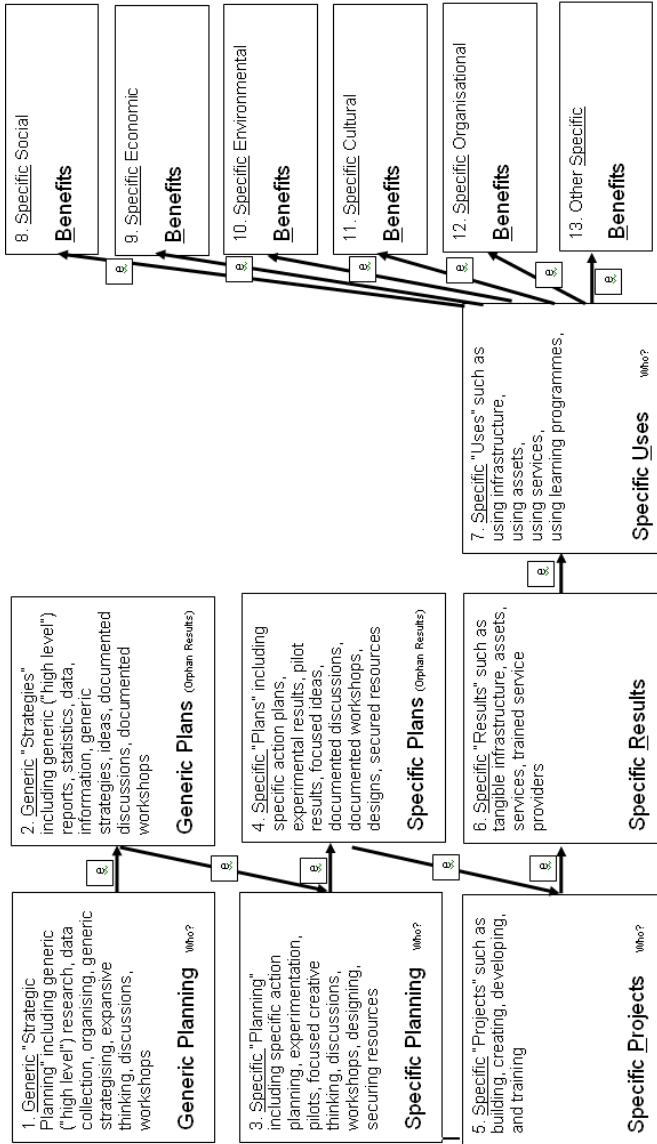


Diagram 8 The OpenStrategy Diagnostic Flowchart

The OpenStrategy Diagnostic flow chart delineates both *generic* and *specific* steps in almost every strategy process:

1. there are one or more generic strategic planning steps which create generic, non-implementable strategies such as national strategies (boxes 1 and 2: Generic Strategic Planning leading to Generic Strategies)
2. there are one or more specific planning steps which create specific, implementable plans such as local action plans (boxes 3 and 4: Specific Planning leading to Specific Plans)
3. there is a specific “doing” step during which products/services get built or created and organisational stakeholders get trained (boxes 5 and 6: Specific Projects leading to Specific Results)
4. there is a specific “using” step in which end-users use whatever has been built in order to create Benefits for themselves and others (boxes 7-13: Specific Uses leading to Specific Benefits)

The OpenStrategy Diagnostic asks the following questions about any strategy when viewed within the context of the OpenStrategy Diagnostic flowchart:

OpenStrategy Diagnostic Questions

1. Is every organisational planning and project activity unequivocally linked through boxes 1-6 to genuinely enable the Uses (box 7) to create one or more Benefits (boxes 8-13)?
2. Who exactly is undertaking the Planning in boxes 1 and 3, the Projects in box 5 and the Uses in box 7?
3. What is the evidence that each link between boxes will actually happen? Specifically, what is the evidence that:
 - a. the stakeholders in box 3 will actually adopt the generic plans/strategies (Orphan Results) from box 2 assuming that the plans in box 2 are perfect?
 - b. the stakeholders in box 5 will actually adopt, resource and implement the specific plans (Orphan Results) from box 4 assuming that the plans in box 4 are perfect?
 - c. the Users in box 7 will actually Use the Results in box 6?
 - d. these Uses in box 7 will actually create the Benefits in boxes 8-13?
 - e. the cost of a specific Project in box 5 is less than the value of all the Benefits arising via Results and Uses from that Project?
4. Are the Projects (box 5), Results (box 6) , Uses (box 7) and Benefits (Boxes 8-13) sufficiently specific that they will actually happen:
 - a. geographically specific? (where will actions take place?)
 - b. thematically specific? (on what topics?)
 - c. organisationally (including partnerships) specific? (who are the service providers?)
 - d. demographically specific? (who are the users who will benefit?)
 - e. specific in other areas as well, eg process specific (how will things be done?)
5. Is the value of the Benefits greater than the total Project and User costs?

The pass/fail criteria for the OpenStrategy Diagnostic

In order to pass the OpenStrategy Diagnostic and hence have an implementable strategy that will actually make a difference:

1. The answer to question 1 must be **“yes”**
2. The answers to question 2 must be **“precise and explicit”**
3. The answers to questions 3 must be **“convincing”**
4. The answers to questions 4 must be **“yes, they are sufficiently specific to attach budgets, Project managers and stakeholders to”**
5. The answer to question 5 must be **“yes”**

Next Steps

If the PRUB and OpenStrategy concepts resonate with you and you'd like to find out how to apply them in your own Strategy Environment to Validate and/or create your own SubStrategies and OpenStrategies, please contact us and we'll discuss your needs.

We offer four main packages of services:

1. PRUB-Diagnosis
2. PRUB-Basic
3. PRUB-Validate
4. PRUB-Accumulate/OpenStrategy

These packages are:

1. A PRUB-Validate-Diagnosis will give you guidance as to your "starting point" with respect to strategy development and implementation. PRUB-Diagnosis is a service whereby trained PRUB-analysts will first translate your existing strategies and related documents into SubStrategies and then provide a report and recommendations on how to optimise the development and implementation of your strategies and action plans.
2. PRUB-Basic enables you to create and Validate small SubStrategies of up to about 30 Items (Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits). The introductory PRUB-Basic package consists of PRUB-Basic training (generally on-line but potentially via workshops) plus the simplest version of the PRUB-Validate web-tool.

3. PRUB-Validate enables you to create and Validate larger SubStrategies of up to 200 Items as well as make these SubStrategies visible to multiple stakeholders and also downloadable into the larger PRUB-Accumulate (OpenStrategy) web-tool. The PRUB-Validate package consists of the PRUB-Validate web-tool (with the unique OpenStrategy keyword categorisation and tagging system) together with PRUB-Thinker training.
4. PRUB-Accumulate/OpenStrategy enables you to import SubStrategies from multiple instances of the PRUB-Validate web-tools in order to create large OpenStrategies, eg Sustainable Community Strategies based on all the SubStrategies that are happening in the community. The PRUB-Accumulate/OpenStrategy package consists of the PRUB-Accumulate web-tool plus PRUB-Thinker training plus either more advanced training and/or mentoring and facilitation support from OpenStrategies Ltd or its associates.

OpenStrategies Ltd and our partners also provide bespoke strategy development services such as advanced translations and diagnostics, training and strategy development workshops, strategy facilitation and mentoring. Please contact us to discuss options: info@openstrategies.com

Appendix 1: Glossary of some PRUB and OpenStrategy terms

PRUB and OpenStrategy have many characteristics which cannot be addressed effectively in this small booklet. These characteristics plus a number of PRUB terms and concepts are explained in various PRUB-strategic-thinker and OpenStrategy facilitator training courses and are briefly described here to indicate the breadth and depth of the OpenStrategy system.

PRUB

This acronym is used to denote the four Item types: Projects, Results, Uses, and Benefits. Items are often recorded in this order when, prior to developing SubStrategies, a record of existing Projects and activities is desired. This order is also useful when the focus is on implementing a strategy or SubStrategies

BURP

This acronym is used to denote the four Item types *in reverse order*: Benefits, Uses, Results, and Projects. Items are often recorded in this order when the focus is first and foremost on defining the actual desired Benefits for a community or when the focus is more on developing strategy and less on recording existing activities

Items

An Item is one of the four elements making up the PRUB structure and is a Project, a Result, a Use, or a Benefit.

Issues

Issues are themes or topics which are the focus of SubStrategies or an OpenStrategy. They typically generate a number of different Items and sometimes entire SubStrategies or sequences of PRUBs.

Generic vs Specific (or 'high-level vs low-level') phrases/terms

Strategic documents are typically full of generic statements that use verbs such as 'conserve' or 'ensure' or 'improve' that can neither be practically and directly implemented nor lead to specific Results or actual Uses.

Placeholder PRUB Item

A placeholder Item is used when translating an existing text or stakeholder statements and are unable to determine the exact meaning of certain sentences or phrases. When this occurs, your guess at the most likely explanation is inserted in the relevant PRUB column and is indicated as a placeholder item in a number of different ways.

End-point PRUB Item

'End point' Items are 'one-off', completed Items with a fixed point of completion (or application or availability). They can be quantified or measured.

Ongoing PRUB Item

Ongoing Items have no fixed 'end point' of availability or application. Such Items are not or cannot easily be quantified or measured and may continue indefinitely

Evolving PRUB Item

An evolving Item implies the prospect of continuing change and improvement; the focus is on changes that happen over a (sometimes specified) period of time

Links, positive and negative

In the PRUB structure, when one Item contributes to another, a Link is formed, indicated by arrows. The Link between two Items may be positive, negative or neutral.

A positive Link indicates that the first item will increase the likelihood of the second Item occurring or increase the extent to which it occurs.

A negative Link indicates that the first item will decrease the likelihood of the second Item occurring or reduce the extent to which it occurs.

If it is not possible to establish Links between Items in a SubStrategy, this provides an indication that something is wrong with the SubStrategy and needs investigation.

Evidence

A SubStrategy or OpenStrategy only have value if there is solid Evidence that the statements it contains are true or very likely to be true. This is particularly so in relation to having solid Evidence that Results will in fact be Used by communities/citizens *and* that such Uses will generate worthwhile Benefits. It's also crucially important to have firm Evidence that adoptable Orphan Results are in fact going to be adopted

OpenStrategy

An OpenStrategy is a strategy that has been translated into PRUB Items, audited for gaps, repetition, lack of clarity etc, then entered into OSL's OpenStrategy software tool where the data can be manipulated and presented in a variety of ways. (For further information on OpenStrategy, please email us on info@openstrategies.com and we will reply promptly)

Strategy Environment-Diagnosis

A Strategy Environment Diagnosis consists of identifying all strategy requirements for a stakeholder group, defining how they do, or should, inter-link, clarifying the quality of these strategies and inter-links and recommending actions for creating an effective OpenStrategy Matrix. A Strategy Environment Diagnosis should be performed before any strategies are created

OpenStrategy Matrix

An OpenStrategy Matrix consists of several layers of OpenStrategies eg an inter-linked set of national, regional and local OpenStrategies

PRUB-Validate-Diagnosis

A PRUB-Validate-Diagnosis is a Project-by-Project diagnosis of real Projects that are ready and able to be implemented in order to assess whether they will genuinely lead via Results and Uses to Benefits.

Projects

Projects are actions or activities undertaken by organisations, but these can appear in many different shapes or forms depending on the organisations involved.

Results

Results are the consequences of Projects and are in place to be 'handed over' to the citizen to Use and Benefit from.

There are basically two main categories of Result:

- a usable Result that is able to be used directly and immediately by communities
- an unusable Result that is not able to be used directly and immediately (Orphan Result).

There are some powerful subtleties relating to the types of Results (both usable and unusable) as follows:

- A **usable** Result is one that is ready to be handed over and used by the community; it is sufficient, it may or may not be necessary, and it may or may not be wanted
- An **unusable** Result is one where there are obstacles to its use and where some sort of modification needs to be made before it can become a usable Result
- A **necessary** Result is one which must be present in order to achieve the desired Use and Benefit. A necessary Result is both usable and wanted (valued).
- An **unnecessary Result** is one where something sufficiently similar already exists and so the new Result has led to duplication
- A **sufficient** Result has everything ready for handover to the community; nothing is missing and no further steps are needed before the handover can occur.
- An **insufficient Result** is one that is not currently being used, but which could be used once it has been modified or further developed in some way or where, if accompanied by other Results, could be part of a sufficient set of Results.
- A **wanted** Result is one which the community sees as having value and thus something they want to Use. A wanted Result should be usable, may or may not be necessary, and should be sufficient.

- An **Unwanted Result** is a result not based on any evidence of community need or desire and where subsequently there is no pick up or Use by the community.
- An **Abandoned Orphan Result** is a result which cannot or will not be used in any way whatsoever, either internally by the organisation or by clients or the community
- An **Adopted Orphan Result** is one which cannot be directly used by clients or the community, but which contributes to other Projects and so is used internally
- **Internal** use refers to the use made of Adopted Orphan Results which are used internally to contribute to another Project (note that no capital letter is used for 'internal use'; 'Use' with a capital letter refers only to 'Use' by the community for their own benefit)

Uses

Uses are *actions or activities* done by individuals or groups of individuals or even companies but almost without exception, they will be doing them for their own Benefit.

The types of Use are as follows:

Ongoing	evolving or	end-point		
Active	or	passive		
Simple	or	compound		
Optional	or	non-optional	or	automatic

In many traditional strategy documents, "Passive Uses" are frequently used to record Items for SubStrategies (eg 'Preschoolers receive better health care' or 'People out of work get free training) when "Active Uses" are much better. Passive (and incorrect) Uses frequently follow on from incorrectly worded Results (eg Free night classes *delivered* to people out of work' or 'Better health care provided to preschoolers'). It's much better to word Uses actively ie where the User is the active subject of the activity.

Uses involving **changes of behaviour**

Optional: when people have the option of changing their behaviour and acting in new or different ways, often in response to publicity campaigns or education programmes (*eg people accepting free dental care for pre-schoolers*)

Non-optional: when governing or legislative changes are introduced which are beyond the control of people in the community so that people feel they have little choice but to comply (*eg restrictions on noise levels at parties*)

Automatic: when governing or legislative changes are introduced which are beyond the control of people in the community and where people have little real choice or even awareness over whether or not to engage with the changed circumstances (*eg legislation requiring lower salt and fat content in take-away food*)

Benefits

Benefits are the consequences of Uses or actions or activities done by *citizens, customers or the community*. They are the final goal of any strategy, and are sometimes called desired outcomes in other strategy documents.

OpenStrategy Diagnosis

An OpenStrategy audit is the audit of either generic or specific strategies to assess whether they satisfy the rules of SubStrategies/OpenStrategies

SubStrategies

SubStrategies are small sets of PRUBs which typically focus on a specific topic or demographic group. If they are generic then they can't be directly implemented. If they are specific, they can be directly implemented.

SubStrategies may be created in their own right or they may be distilled from larger, broad-theme OpenStrategies Strategy in order to focus on elements which can then be given sufficient detail or specificity that they can eventually be implemented. SubStrategies can be created from other strategy documents by applying the PRUB translation principles of distilling, refining, and inferring.

Translate: distil + refine + infer

When working on existing strategy documents or material with a view to translating the text into PRUB Items (and possibly forming SubStrategies), you apply the skills of **distilling** and **refining** PRUB Items, and **inferring** meaning from those parts of the text where the meaning is unclear, ambiguous, or incomplete.

Distil: this involves taking apart and breaking down existing text into PRUB Items

Refine: this task involves modifying existing text in order to turn it into PRUB Items

Infer: this step becomes necessary when the existing text is ambiguous, imprecise, or has gaps in meaning. Inferring may also take place when existing text has omitted to 'spell out the obvious'

Appendix 2: Some further characteristics of PRUB and OpenStrategy

OpenStrategy and PRUB encapsulate and promote many features which support multi-stakeholder strategy development and implementation. Many of these are very briefly summarised below solely as an indicator of these features. Each feature has been thoroughly researched and tested by the OpenStrategy team and in most cases, the power of PRUB has exceeded expectations.

To develop a more detailed understanding of these factors, please contact OpenStrategies Ltd on info@openstrategies.com to discuss OpenStrategy and PRUB training, product and service options.

Saving money

PRUB'ing a Project is a rapid and explicit means of determining whether it's going to produce Results that will be Used to create worthwhile Benefits – Benefits that are collectively worth more than the combined cost of the associated Projects and Uses.

If a Project is demonstrated to be creating only an Abandoned Orphan Result then the Project should be stopped (or not started) and money saved.

OpenStrategies Ltd predicts that if the public sector stopped all Projects that are producing Orphan Results or are producing Results that lead to Benefits that are worth less than the cost of the Project, then savings of at least 10% could be made.

Earning the right to lead, not taking control

The transparency of an OpenStrategy provides stakeholders with an opportunity to demonstrate their strategic planning capabilities in such a professional manner that other stakeholders decide to let them “get on with it” because they are demonstrably doing such a good job. OpenStrategy calls this “earning the right to lead”

Rating vs Prioritising

The whole issue of prioritising SubStrategies is challenging. The OpenStrategy team has reviewed this area in depth and concluded that in multi-stakeholder societies there is seldom an absolute set of priorities which will work for all stakeholders. Instead, different sub-groups have different sub-sets of priorities. Instead of prioritising SubStrategies, the OpenStrategy “rating system” enables stakeholders to identify the “importance to them” of each Item or SubStrategy and through this process to identify like-minded stakeholders with whom they can engage.

Joined up working

The OpenStrategy system supports joined up working whereby organisations retain their individual identities (ie their “silos”) but are able to link these silo activities into cohesive collaborative networks of joined up working. This enables inter-organisational cooperation while enabling each organisation to retain responsibility and accountability for its own work. In this way, resources are “joined up”, they are not “pooled”.

Community Cohesion

Through the use of the transparent OpenStrategy system with its simple and common PRUB language, a wide range of stakeholders can communicate and share ideas more effectively than before with the result that community cohesion is enhanced.

Doing the right thing, not just doing it right

OpenStrategy and PRUB are all about “doing the right thing” (strategy) rather than “doing it right” (project management).

Positive wording of Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits

A strategy and an OpenStrategy are about achieving positive outcomes so OpenStrategy has adopted the principle that all Items (Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits) will be worded positively, ie as *desired* Projects, Results, Uses and Benefits. This approach works because psychologically people want to achieve positive outcomes. However, not every action leads to a purely positive outcome. This is accommodated in the OpenStrategy system through the use of negative Links.

Citizen-centric/community focus

Through their emphasis on understanding Uses and Benefits, PRUB/OpenStrategy focus on the importance of understanding what communities and citizens want or are prepared to *actually* do – a totally citizen-centric approach. If starting the development of a strategy with a

blank sheet of paper, it's recommended to start with identifying Benefits and then working backwards through Uses to Results and Projects (BURP)

Public engagement

The simple PRUB language and SubStrategies simplify public engagement by focusing on the most important strategic factors (PRUB) and sharing this information in a succinct and readily understood format.

Equality or inequality of stakeholders

In an OpenStrategy system, stakeholders are equal when they are generating ideas and creating an OpenStrategy but they are unequal in terms of their capacity to implement their SubStrategies. Recognition of this dual equality/inequality is very important when creating and implementing an OpenStrategy.

Performance measurement and management

PRUB helps with the identification of *what to measure and when* by explicitly identifying the sequence of actions from Projects through to the creation of Benefits. When a Project is underway it's appropriate to measure *organisational process parameters* associated with the Project. Once the Project's Results are available it's appropriate to measure *quality parameters* associated with the Results. Then once the Results are being Used, it's appropriate to measure *community process parameters* associated with the Use. Then as Benefits arise, it's appropriate to shift the measurement focus to *community Benefit quality parameters*.

High/low, generic/specific

There are many ways in which a strategy can be non-implementable, essentially if it is too "high level" or too "generic. However, there is just one way for it to be implementable i.e. to be specific with respect to *all* key parameters such as demographics, geography, organisations, themes and processes.

The explicit nature of PRUB and OpenStrategy help clarify whether a strategy is implementable. In this respect, there is definitely a need for high-level or generic strategies to provide overall guidance for low-level specific strategies – what is important to recognise is that the high-level generic strategies *cannot be directly implemented – only specific strategies/OpenStrategies can be directly implemented*

Evidence

It's vital to have solid Evidence to justify strategies and action plans. One challenge is to identify the most important Evidence. The OpenStrategies team believes that some of the most vital Evidence relates to the Links between PRUB items, particularly between Results and Uses (ie what Evidence exists that Results will actually be used?) and between Uses and Benefits (ie what Evidence exists that Uses will actually create the desired Benefits?)

Connecting “high” and “low” level actions and people

The OpenStrategy system explicitly identifies and recognises “high” and “low” (usually associated respectively with “generic” and “specific”) concepts *and* their associated stakeholders. By inter-linking such high/low, generic/specific concepts, OpenStrategy helps make linkages between the stakeholders who operate at these different levels of specificity.

Stakeholder control of their own areas of activity

Stakeholders in an OpenStrategy retain control over their own areas of activity, ie their own SubStrategies while at the same time being able to see how their SubStrategies fit into the big picture of an overall OpenStrategy. This reinforces “joined up working” or “joining up silos” rather than “breaking down silos”

Mapping what’s already happening as well as planning new activities

PRUB and OpenStrategy can be used to map what’s already happening (usually using PRUB) as well as planning new activities (usually using BURP)

OpenStrategies as libraries of SubStrategies

An OpenStrategy consists of a library of SubStrategies which can be inter-Linked or even disaggregated and re-Linked relatively easily. As such, a library of SubStrategies can be implemented as-is and it can also be copied and modified by other multi-stakeholder groups so that it is customised for their purposes.

Master Library of Local Authority SubStrategies

It is relatively straightforward to create a single Master Library of Local Authority SubStrategies which can be accessed by any Local Authority so they can down-load all or some of these SubStrategies and modify them for their own purposes.

Updating an evolving OpenStrategy

Because an OpenStrategy is a web tool, it's relatively easy to update any time and from anywhere with an internet connection

An OpenStrategy supports decision making, it doesn't make decisions

OpenStrategy is a decision support tool, not a decision making tool. By encapsulating all strategic ideas in the same PRUB format, OpenStrategy makes it easier for decision makers to compare ideas and work collaboratively

Forms of engagement with OpenStrategy and PRUB

PRUB and OpenStrategy are designed for different forms of stakeholder engagement ranging from workshops through the answering of questionnaires to direct engagement on-line with the OpenStrategy web tool. As a consequence, stakeholders have a range of choices as to when and how they engage with an OpenStrategy.

Searching and reporting

Because in an OpenStrategy all ideas are in the same PRUB format and are "tagged" using the same keyword categories and keywords, it becomes relatively easy to search for ideas and/or distil reports from the OpenStrategy on any theme, demographic grouping or geographical area. In this way, although an OpenStrategy might be primarily based on Children and Young People, it will nevertheless be possible to distil SubStrategies/reports based on sub-themes such as sport and recreation, drugs and alcohol, teenage pregnancy and so on

Information overload

Most strategy processes are overloaded with semi-random data, information, knowledge and wisdom which stakeholders try to make sense of. The OpenStrategy approach, by contrast, collects just that smallest set of information which has the highest value to the most people, ie PRUB. While a lot of other information has considerable value, stakeholders generally find that once they have clearly spelt out their strategic ideas in PRUB/SubStrategy format, they recognise they have the most important information at their fingertips and that all other information is of secondary importance *to most stakeholders*. However, some pieces of non-PRUB information are extremely important to some stakeholders, so they are welcome to add that to their SubStrategies (within each PRUB Item), but this doesn't change the fact that PRUB information has the *most value to the most people*.

Avoid Mind-leak workshops

So many strategy workshops consist of brainstorming/mind-leaking which produces hundreds of Post-It notes plastered over walls – note which someone has to make sense of after the workshop. Time and time again the resulting “report” is an Abandoned Orphan Result which few people read and practically no-one acts on. By using PRUB-strategic-thinking as the underpinning knowledge management tool in strategy workshops, much more structured and hence useful information is collected and encapsulated in readily refined and implementable SubStrategies.

Capturing all ideas

An OpenStrategy can readily capture and retain all possible strategic ideas even if only a percentage of them ever get implemented. In this way, ideas which may currently be non-implementable for various reasons can be refined over time to the point where at least some of them become implementable. Similarly, ideas which initially had limited stakeholder support may attract more stakeholders as the ideas are refined and thereby attract the resources required to implement them.

The human dynamic

In workshops, the OpenStrategy approach strongly discourages stakeholders from stating their organisational position-of-power but instead asks them to just give their name and to outline their areas of interest. There are a number of important psychological reasons for this, not the least of which is the OpenStrategy emphasis that stakeholders are equals when strategising even if they are unequal when implementing a strategy. If stakeholders identify themselves by their position in the power-hierarchy then this will immediately destroy a sense of equality. As with most of the other characteristics of OpenStrategy, this is a profoundly important characteristic with many implications which cannot be adequately addressed in this brief document.

Stakeholders as willing volunteers

Another psychologically important principle underpinning OpenStrategy is the perspective that stakeholders participating in an OpenStrategy should all be viewed as volunteers. As a result, the OpenStrategy process and outcomes must create at least *some* value for *all* stakeholders so that they continue to be motivated to volunteer their time to attend strategy events and to get on with implementation. While many stakeholders will in fact be paid to participate in strategy development, they all have many demands on their time, hence the concept of “willing volunteers” helps promote ongoing effective stakeholder involvement

The scale of collaboration

Large numbers of stakeholders can plan or strategise collaboratively but in reality, strategies are implemented by very small groups of stakeholders focusing on one or two SubStrategies, usually a single organisation and perhaps 3 or 4 organisations. OpenStrategy explicitly recognises and enables this reality through its focus on implementable small-group SubStrategies while retaining the OpenStrategy view of the big picture.

Effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness is about “doing the right things” whereas efficiency is about “doing things right”. OpenStrategy and PRUB guide the selection of the right things to do so initially their focus is on effectiveness. However, as a consequence of doing the right things and stopping doing the wrong things, OpenStrategy and PRUB have a major impact on overall efficiency.