
Output 6 of the ALTEF-Project

Competence development in the workplace The „Agile Learning“ - Approach

-

Learning Cards on “Change” in Project Management (Learning units for self directed learning)

Content

SMART(e) Objectives.....	3
Phases in the Change Process.....	7
Stakeholder Analysis	10
Stage Gate Process.....	14
Storytelling Method	18
Positive Error Culture	22



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SMART(e) Objectives

By Eve Müller

Occasions

- Organising your own work in a self-organised way
- Initiating a personal change process

Outcomes

- Can derive goals from his own (working) everyday life.
- Can independently specify SMART goals.
- Can specify these goals using the SMART formula.

Application

Occasion

- What would you like to formulate a specific goal for? Please briefly outline the occasion (e.g. start of a new project).

Goal formulation

- Please formulate a specific goal. Pay attention to the SMART formula (specific, measurable, accepted, realistic, terminable).

Check criteria

- Please give a brief explanation of why you believe this goal corresponds to the SMART formula.

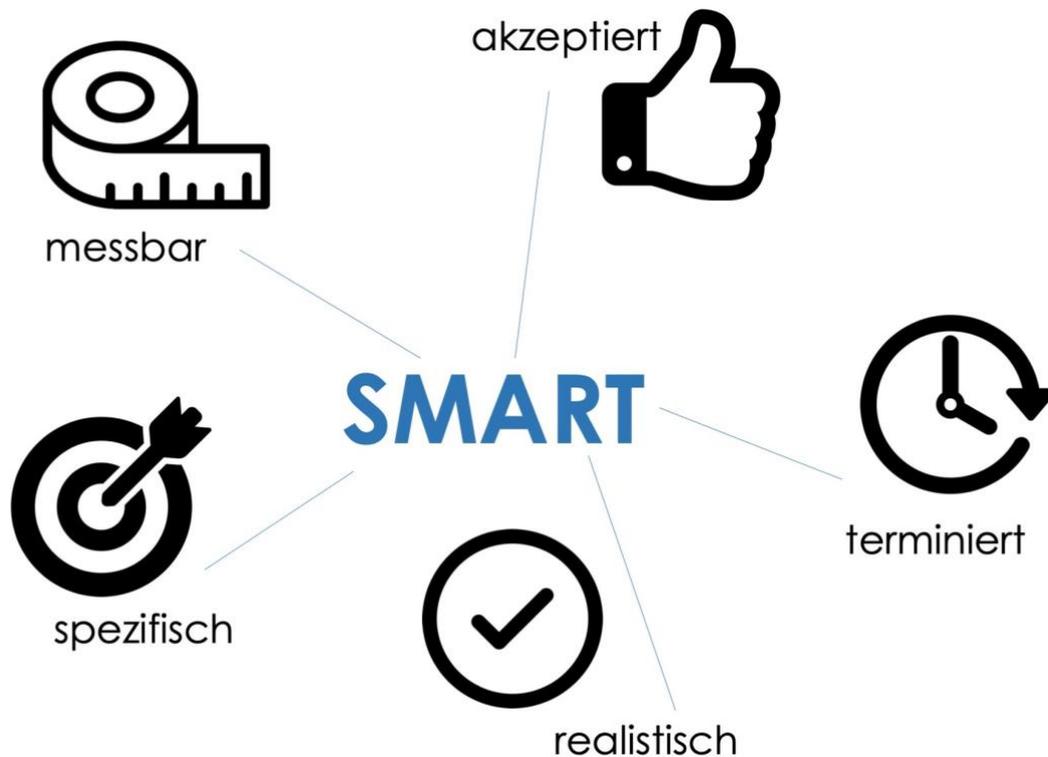
Impulses

It is a great hurdle to formulate goals in such a way that they can actually be achieved. Even if the SMART formula for the formulation of goals is often taught in seminars and further education and you may already be familiar with it, some people still make mistakes when formulating their own goals. That is why we would like to go into this method in more detail at this point. Because only those who have a specific goal in mind can consistently and efficiently plan and tread the path to this goal.

Formulating goals is not only important for individuals, but should also be given sufficient attention in every initiation phase of a project. Because number 1 of the reasons why projects fail are unclear goals. While one usually has no influence on the budget and the available resources, one can control the formulation of goals very clearly.

SMART formula for the objective

SMART is an acronym and stands for specific, measurable, accepted, realistic and **terminable**. A state to be achieved through the project should exactly match these points.



- **S** for specific

A goal should be formulated as concretely and precisely as possible. This ensures that there is no room for interpretation. This point is particularly important if the goal is to apply to more than one person, as it ensures that all parties have the same idea of the goal. But it is also important for a goal of one's own, because it makes the goal more tangible and much more concrete. Specific does not mean that you are already describing HOW you will achieve a goal. Stick to the description of a target state.

~~Early start of the project~~

Establishment of a project team with 5 members from all departments as of 01 February

? What exactly is it that I want to achieve?

- **M** for measurable

Determine criteria by which you can judge whether the goal has been achieved or not. At best, these are concrete figures (e.g. elapsed time, costs, indicators of quality or progress). If you cannot measure the achievement of the goal, you cannot achieve the goal, because how do you then decide on success?

~~Low project costs~~

Compliance with a project budget of 300.000€

~~Increased customer satisfaction~~

Increase customer satisfaction rating to 90%

? How can I measure my goal achievement ?

- **A** for accepted

The acceptance of a goal is an important, albeit 'soft' criterion. Formulated goals should always be attractive and appropriate, because nothing is more demotivating than having to do something you don't think is desirable or see no reason for. Ideally, you will be

enthusiastic when you think about achieving your goals. Then it will be easier for you to create motivation and put your goals into practice. If the target is to apply to several persons, all participants should be allowed to actively participate in the formulation of the target in order to maximise acceptance. It is also possible to weigh up different alternatives here.

~~Reduce customer satisfaction rating to 30%.~~

Increase customer satisfaction rating to 90%

? Is the goal relevant and desirable for me ?

- **R** for realistic

This point is closely related to the previous point. Goals that can be realistically achieved are more easily accepted and more motivating than goals that cannot be achieved anyway. It should therefore be assessed here whether the goal can be achieved with the given resources in the desired time. The basic rule here is: always choose a target in such a way that it does not completely overwhelm you, because then you run the risk of not trying it at all. Your goals should challenge you, but not overwhelm you. Be ambitious, but realistic.

~~Increased customer satisfaction~~

Increase customer satisfaction rating to 100%

? Is it really realistic that I will achieve this goal?

- **T** for time bound

Every goal must have a clear deadline by which the goal is to be achieved. At this point, the final achievement of the objectives is assessed by consulting the measurable criteria. Even if the goal is to be valid for several persons, this date is central, since otherwise one believes fast, one has still eternally time. A concrete date makes legs!

~~Early start of the project~~

Setting up a project team by 01 February

? When do I check whether I have reached the goal ?

A final example: From "I want to earn 3.500€ per month. I will earn 3.500€ gross (measurable) until 01.01.2025 (scheduled) through my independent work as XY (specific) in the month by means of this SMART formula. (realistic and attractive)". Usually there is not only one overriding goal, but also many smaller intermediate goals. All of these can be simplified and clarified using the SMART formula to maximize the chance of achieving goals.

Research on goal setting

The two psychologists Edwin Locke and Gary Latham explored different forms of goal setting under the title "goal setting". Below you will find some practical tips that can be derived from 25 years of research and over 400 studies.

- **Stick to the SMART formula!** Specific and ambitious goals always lead to better performance than vague and easy goals.
- **Set yourself ambitious goals!** Ambitious goals are always more motivating than simple goals. So find a good measure between a too easy and a too difficult target. You can dare to do something. If you then achieve an ambitious goal, you can be all the more proud of yourself and particularly motivated to tackle new objectives.

- **Always record your goals in writing!** This not only forces you to carefully consider the formulation of goals, but also increases the binding nature of the goals. You can increase this commitment by sharing the goal with colleagues or friends. After all, who wants to brag about high ambitions that they won't reach later?
- **Provide regular feedback!** In order for you to consistently stick to your goal, it is helpful to obtain regular feedback during the process as well. You can give yourself feedback by judging how far you have come in achieving your goals (how much project budget has already been used up?) using the criteria you have defined, or you can ask another person for feedback. That can motivate!

Finally, a fitting quotation:

"Man is a purposeful being - but he usually strives too much and aims too little."

[Further information](#)

In this TED-Talk John Doerr talks about how to set good as well as bad goals:

<https://youtu.be/L4N1q4Rni9I>

Sources

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2006). New directions in goal-setting theory. *Current directions in psychological science*, 15(5), 265-268.

Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American psychologist*, 57(9), 705.

Phases in the Change Process

By Benjamin Höhne

Occasions

- Planning a change project
- Planning of a stakeholder meeting
- Preparation of a communication strategy

Outcomes

- Knows the principle of phase models in change processes
- Can design a rough strategy for a change process

Application

- In which area is your organization currently going through a change process?
- What phase is this change in?
- Describe three situations/contexts in your daily work life in which you could strengthen desired behaviour in the change process through "nudges".

Impulses

Three, four, five or seven? The models and theories do not agree on how many phases one should best distinguish in a change project, but there is agreement on that they can be divided into different phases. All models recognize that a change project requires different activities depending on its maturity level or phase.

To illustrate this idea, we consider one of the most reduced and oldest models of change processes in organizations: Kurt Lewin's **change model**. According to his ideas, a successful and sustainable change process can be divided into three phases:

- **Unfreezing**
- **Changing**
- **Refreezing**

Unfreezing

Many people are initially hostile to change. The goal during the thawing phase is therefore to create an awareness of how the status quo is currently hampering the organisation. Old behaviours, ways of thinking, processes, people and organisational structures must be carefully examined to show employees how necessary change is for the company to create or maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. **Communication is particularly important during the thawing phase** so that employees are informed about the impending change, the logic behind it and the benefits for each employee.

Change

Now that people are "defrosted," they can start moving. Lewin realized that change is a process in which the company must move into this new state. This step of change, also known as "transitioning", is characterized by the implementation of the change. At this point, the change becomes real. It is therefore also the time when most people are struggling with the new reality. It is a time of uncertainty and fear that makes it the most

difficult step. During the change step, people begin to learn the new behaviours, processes and ways of thinking. The better prepared they are for this step, the easier it is to complete it. For this reason, **education, communication, support and time are crucial for employees** as they familiarise themselves with change. Here, too, change is a process that must be carefully planned and implemented. During this process, employees should be reminded of the reasons for the change and how they will benefit once it is fully implemented.

Refreezing

Lewin called the final phase of his change model freezing, but many call it re-freezing to symbolize the act of strengthening, stabilizing, and solidifying the new state after the change. Changes to organizational processes, goals, structures, offers or persons are accepted and frozen as a new standard or status quo. Lewin found the freezing step particularly important to ensure that people do not return to their old ways of thinking or acting before implementing the change. Efforts must be made to ensure that change is not lost, but anchored in the culture of the company and maintained as an acceptable way of thinking or acting. **Positive rewards and recognition of individual efforts** are often used to strengthen the new condition because it is believed that positively enhanced behaviour is likely to repeat itself.

Nudging as a helpful support concept

Nudging comes from the field of behavioural economics. Specifically by the economists Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, who in their book "Nudge" described a concept of how the findings of behavioural economics and psychology could be used to better reinforce desired behaviours on a societal level. Put more simply, **how do I help people make better choices without restricting their freedom of choice?** With a nudge in the right direction. Such a nudge is every little feature in the environment that attracts our attention and changes our behaviour.

If you want to help people to make better decisions, one of the strongest instruments is the presentation and linking of options in everyday life, so to speak the **decision-making architecture** in an organisation. Anyone who designs the environment in which people make decisions is a decision architect. So the route you take through an IKEA or supermarket is clearly pre-planned and should encourage you to make certain purchase decisions ("nudges").

Although nudging is about preserving people's freedom of choice, a decision-making architecture cannot be neutral. Richard Thaler often refers to the example of planning meals in a school canteen. For example, children in a cafeteria more often choose the food that is presented to them first. As a cafeteria manager, you now have several options:

- Focus on healthy options to promote healthier eating habits.
- Start with the unhealthy options to make children fatter.
- Choose the most profitable as the first option to make the financial director happy.
- Present the food at random, which is also a choice.

As a decision architect, you **always** have to **make a choice**. The decision architecture is not neutral. If one is aware of these structures, one can also use their principles for the design of change processes. Especially in the phases in which new behaviour patterns are to be

practiced and strengthened, one can arrange the decision situations in everyday life as much as possible in such a way that they simplify the decision for the desired behaviour.

Further information

A comparison of different change management models as well as their advantages and disadvantages can be found at cleverism.com: <https://www.cleverism.com/major-approaches-models-of-change-management/>

Nudge: How to make smart decisions:

<https://www.amazon.de/Nudge-Wie-kluge-Entscheidungen-anst%C3%B6%C3%9Ft/dp/3548373666/>

Stakeholder Analysis

By Benjamin Höhne

Occasions

- Identifying stakeholders in a project
- Analyse alliances and resistances in a project
- Identifying common needs and interests in a project

Outcomes

- Has an understanding of the different actors in a project
- Can develop the basis for a stakeholder strategy

Application

Arrange the stakeholders in your project on the power interest matrix (interactive resource; alternatively on your own chart).

Impulses

Stakeholders are all persons or groups who are affected by the activities and decisions in a project, who actively shape them or participate in them in other ways. In order to know these dependencies and to include them in the decision-making process, it is worth getting to know the stakeholders in a project better. Successful projects know who their stakeholders are and what motivates them. This is where stakeholder analysis comes in.

Stakeholder identification

Before stakeholders can be analysed, they must be identified. For example, project participants who initially appear insignificant can gain the ability to sabotage the entire project if they are not taken into account from the outset. For example the following categories can be used as a rough scheme for classifying stakeholders:

- **Executives** are stakeholders of the parent organisation, including the project sponsor.
- **Customers** pay for the product or service (the services) that the project produces.
- The **project team** produces these products and services.
- **Experts provide** the project with expert advice and resources.
- **Investors** ensure the financing of the project.
- **Suppliers provide** external products and services.
- **State organisations** issue regulations and authorisations.
- **Committees, bodies or NGOs** approve results or want to influence decisions in the project.

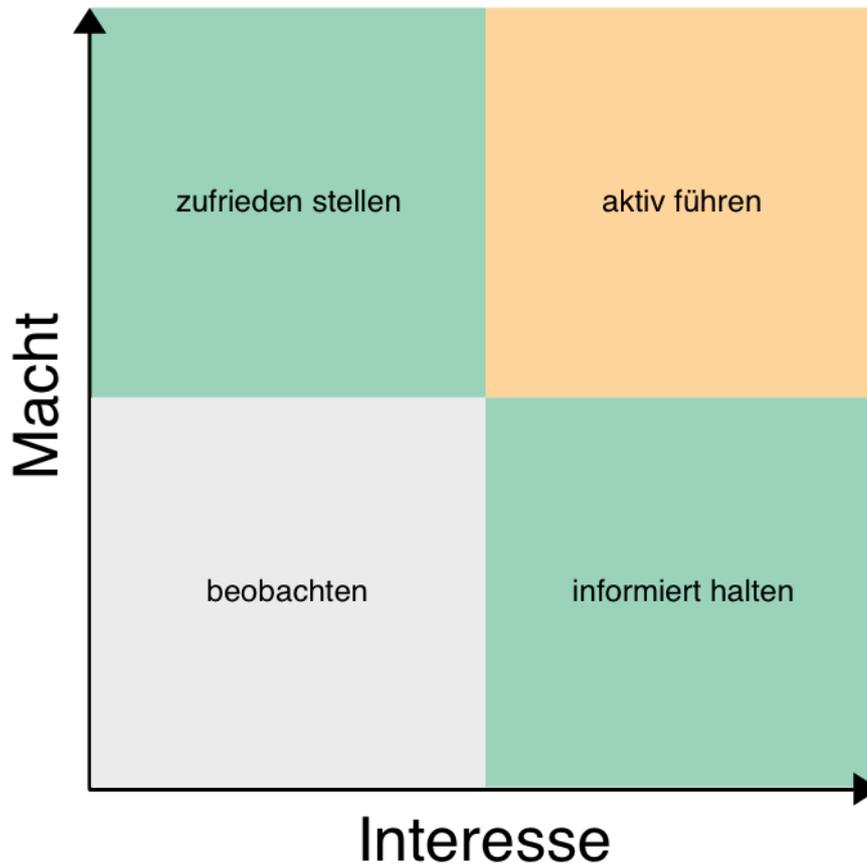
Power interest matrix

There are two primary variables that define interest groups and how they influence the project.

Power is the ability of the stakeholder to change or stop the project.

Interest is the degree of (subjective) concern with the results of the project. In other words, the size of the overlap between the needs of the stakeholder and the needs of the project.

For this reason, the most common method of stakeholder analysis is a **power interest matrix**. This chart may seem simple on the surface, but it provides a wealth of information about the stakeholders and how to manage them.



The four quadrants, in which each stakeholder lies, each have different leadership characteristics.

Little power and interest

Observe to ensure that they are not able to stop or modify the project.

High power and little interest

Satisfy so that the project is not endangered by a single stakeholder.

Little power and high interest

Keep informed so that these stakeholders can be won over as allies.

High power and high interest

Active leadership, as they have a great influence on the project.

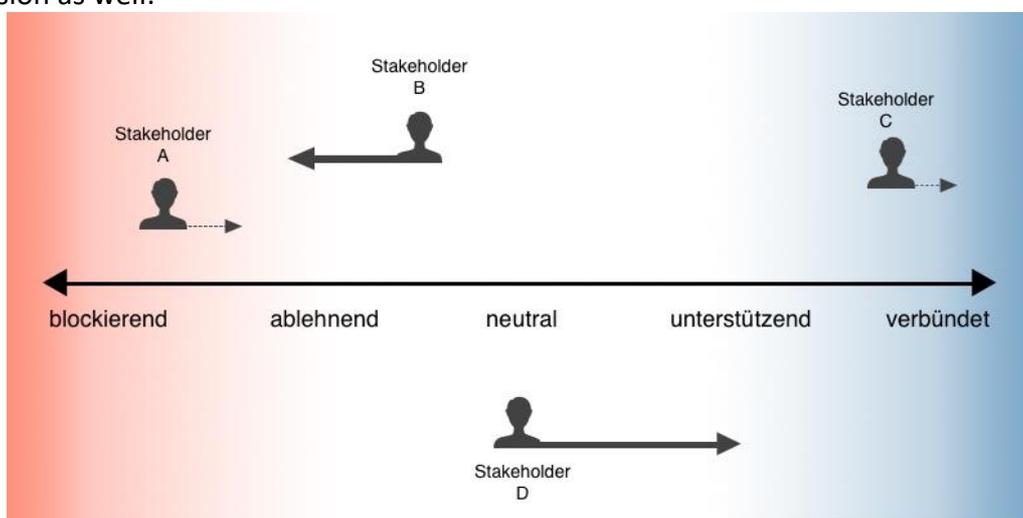
For example, a state approval authority could have very high power, but very little interest in the project. They must be satisfied or they can refuse permits. Likewise, an environmental

protester could have very little power, but great interest. They must be kept informed so that they do not mobilise excessive resistance.

The Power-Interest Matrix contains only one point that indicates where the stakeholder is located on the chart. A larger stakeholder analysis matrix can broaden the definitions of where this power comes from, how it exercises it and what its interest in the project is.

Support vs. Resistance

In most projects, the stakeholders play in different teams. They have different values and interests. These competing interests demand that project managers not only understand the needs and objectives of stakeholders, but also have strong conflict resolution, negotiation and communication skills. It can therefore be helpful to classify the stakeholders in this dimension as well:



By classifying the stakeholders on the continuum, current developments or objectives can also be visualized with arrows of varying strength.

Various category systems can be used to understand the motives and needs of stakeholders. For a rough overview, one can refer to the following overarching needs for Reiss in order to recognize possible needs of the project stakeholders.

Acceptance - the need to be appreciated.

Curiosity - the need to acquire knowledge.

Food - the need for food

Family - the need to take care of one's descendants.

Honor - the need to remain true to the usual values of one's own group.

Idealism - the need for social justice

Independence - the need for independence and personal responsibility

Order - the need for structured, established and conventional environments

Physical activity - the need to train one's own body.

Power - the need for will control

Romanticism - the need for mating or sex.

Saving - the need to collect something.

Social contact - the need for relationship with other people

Social status - the need for social meaning

Silence - the need to be safe and protected.

Revenge - the need to strike back against another person.

Further information

If the stakeholders of a project are to be worked out in a workshop with other participants, a more comprehensive procedure is worthwhile, as explained for example in this video from "More than Metrics": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqZfiTp1HZw>

A good introduction to the most important principles of stakeholder management can be found at the Association for Project Management: <https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/stakeholder-engagement/key-principles/>

Stage Gate Process

By Peter Heßbrüggen

Occasions

- Generate and evaluate ideas
- Stimulating innovative projects and getting them off the ground
- Managing and sustaining innovative projects

Outcomes

- Can describe the most important gates of an innovation process
- Can identify ideas that are suitable for an innovation process
- Can motivate his environment to contribute ideas for an innovation process

Application

Needs

- In which areas do you see a need?
- With which existing solutions are many people extremely dissatisfied?

Ideas

- What idea would you like to suggest?

Challenge

- What challenging questions can you formulate to inspire your team to look for ideas?

Support

- How can you create an environment to stimulate ideas for innovative incremental improvements?
- How can you create an environment to stimulate radical and disruptive ideas?

Impulses

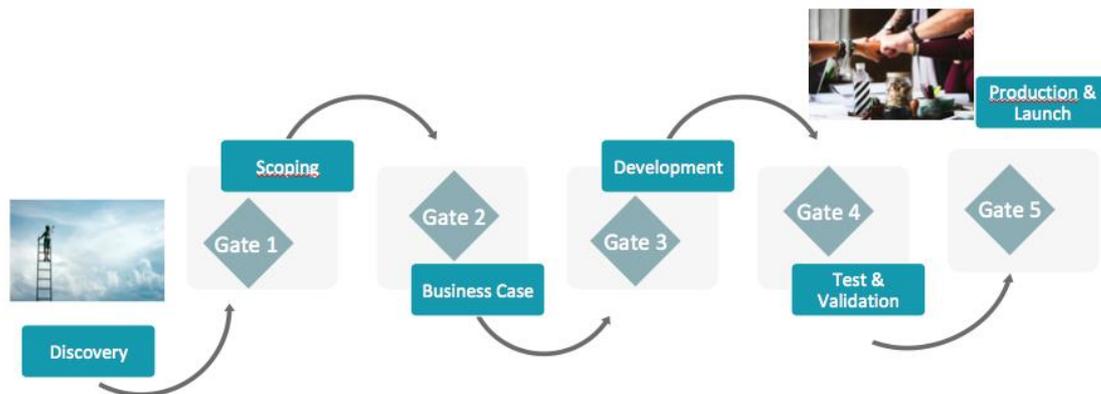
Stage Gate Innovation Process according to Cooper

The Stage-Gate model was developed by [Robert G. Cooper](#) to significantly optimize innovation and development processes. The model pursues a number of objectives which have either not been taken into account in the development processes to date or have only been taken into account to a suboptimal extent. So the goals consist in:

- Quality improvement of the process performance
- Sharper focus and better prioritisation
- Parallel process handling at high speed
- Use of a cross-departmental team
- Explicit inclusion of market orientation and market assessment
- Detailed information gathering and forecasting in the development phase
- Creating products with competitive advantages

Like many other development models, the Stage Gate process has undergone an update and evolution, but this is more aimed at companies that already have a solid practical experience with Cooper's process. (Wikipedia)

There are very different types of Stage Gate processes. A simple form is shown in the following figure.

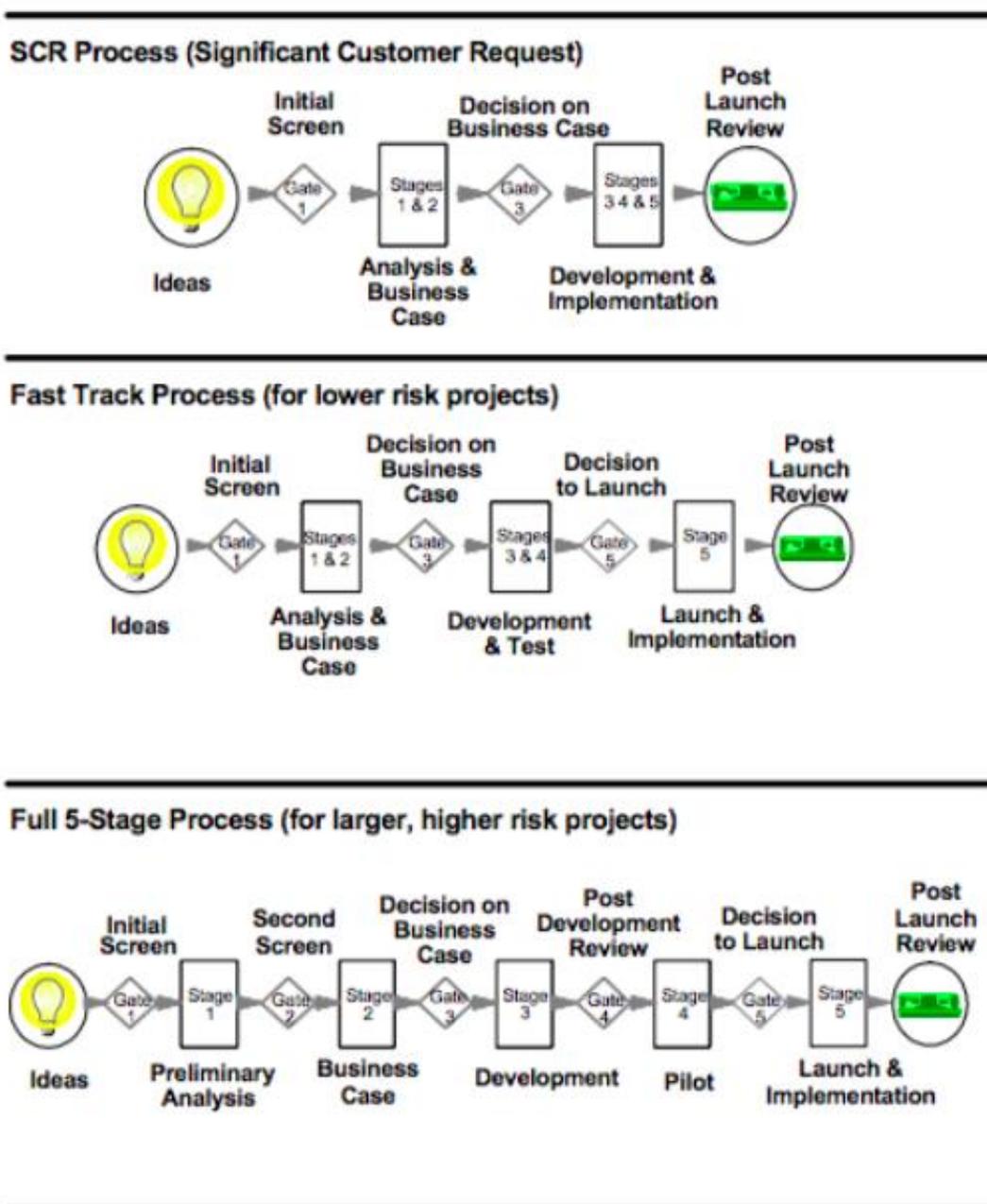


Superstructure

The Stage Gate process divides a development project into several individual stages and so-called [gates](#). The division into the individual sections is carried out logically, so that an innovation at the beginning of the Stage Gate process is first analysed with regard to its technical and economic quality, before it is handed over to development and brought to series maturity and subsequent market launch. The number of sections varies depending on the needs of the industry or individual companies; for example, ten sections are not uncommon in aggregate projects in the automotive industry, while the Cooper standard is four to six sections. The central component of Cooper's model are gates, which are positioned between the individual sections and act as milestones. Before a project team can tackle the tasks of the next section, a decision is made within the gates as to whether the project should be continued or abandoned. The project is measured against pre-defined results and criteria that must be demonstrated. Usually, this project evaluation is carried out by managers in the various departments who control the resources required by the project team for the next stage.

The Stage Gate process developed by Cooper varies depending on the expected economic risk. As shown in the figure: Optimized Stage Gate Process according to Cooper (Robert G. Cooper, Edgett, and Kleinschmidt 2002), cases with a lower risk are assessed on the basis of the business case. There are only two decision events; so-called gates. In gate 1, the ideas are viewed and compared with the evaluation criteria (mandatory and optional criteria). As a result, a case can be terminated as in any gate (KILL) or accepted for a later time on resubmission (HOLD) or for the next phase (GO). In Gate 2 the facts from the business case are evaluated and after an implementation phase a review is carried out. Additional gates will be provided for projects with a larger scope and risk. After the initial screen, a more comprehensive preliminary analysis of the product scope and benefits is carried out and

evaluated in the second screen. In addition, the system prototype is evaluated in the Gate Post Development Preview before the product launch.



Alternative models

In recent years, the stage-gate process has come under fire: in view of the growing pace of innovation, the process is too linear, not adaptive enough and does not encourage experimentation.

Methods of design thinking promise a dynamic and agile approach. Nevertheless, the basic consideration of scheduling certain gates as thresholds and review steps is helpful in establishing a transparent and continuous process that promotes the company's ability to innovate.

A further development of the Stage Gate process and combination with elements of agile learning was depicted in Peter Heßbrüggen's **Sustainable Generation Model**. A learning card on [Sustainable Innovation Design](#) be used as an alternative.

Storytelling Method

By Sandra Bräutigam

Occasions

- Development of a strategy for corporate communication
- Preparation of a marketing measure
- Preparation of a change process

Outcomes

- Can clearly describe what makes the storytelling method a communication tool.
- Can decide whether the storytelling method is suitable as an instrument for planned corporate communications
- Can decide whether the storytelling method is suitable as an instrument for the planned marketing measure

Application

Aims

- What is the purpose of your presentation of information as a story?
- Which target group(s) do you want to reach?

Texture

- Specify the speaking style and narrative voice for the target audience.
- Which communication media and channels do you want to use?

Texture

- Define the beginning of your story.
- Define the middle of your story.
- Define the ending of your story.

Impulses

Storytelling is old and modern at the same time and enjoys increasing popularity in the corporate context. Storytelling describes the telling of stories as a means of memorably conveying experience. This can be factual knowledge, but also beliefs or values.

A good story is entertaining, stirring, and memorable! People love stories. But what makes a good story?

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between the two possible uses of storytelling as a method of corporate communication. One is the strategic use for your own corporate mission / corporate identity. The history of the company, the tradition of the brand or the values of the company play a role here. This provides employees with an opportunity to identify themselves.

However, this learning card deals mainly with storytelling as a marketing measure. The aim here is usually to communicate with the (potential) customer. Trend researcher Matthias Horx says:

Marketing tomorrow means telling a story about people who have set themselves the goal of creating something that people really love and need. Because it's unusually beautiful. Or solves real problems...

So that one does not achieve the opposite of the desired with a bad story, several questions must be clarified in the preparation:

What's the target? Sounds banal, but it's central. You have to know what you want to achieve with a story and you have to focus on this goal again and again during the development of the story!

Who is the target group? Who belongs to your target group? How do you want to reach these people?

The further questions on form and format will be illustrated with an example:

37-year-old Anna K. tries to live health-consciously with her family without being dogmatic. Anna is a food technologist and works for PizGO, a well-known manufacturer of frozen foods. The vegetarian PizGo pizza is also very popular at home, and her two boys even eat broccoli.

However, Anna is worried that the frozen pizza contains a lot of salt. When even the youngest creates a whole pizza on his own, Anna K. puts her mind to make the product healthier! Many weeks of hard work in the new technology centre, which PizGO has built up for the continuous improvement of its products, followed. But success does not come. The pizza becomes either tasteless or spoils quickly.

But one evening when she is cooking for the salad dressing and she only has a small rest of sea salt crystals left over, Anna comes up with an idea! She goes back to the lab and works all night. The next morning, she holds the evidence in her hands. With the new process, PizGO can reduce the salt content of the Tk pizza by 20 %. Thank you, Anna!

Communication attitudes

1. The **field report**

A (fairly) true story told by 'real' people, i.e. customers or employees. In the example of Anna K., the employee and the new recipe at PizGO should actually exist. The home story and the sole attribution of the invention to Anna can be invented.

2. The **Reference Report**

A true story told about real customers. Here real experiences with the product / the company are presented as success.

3. The **fictional story**

Large corporations use it, when not a single product, but rather the brand is advertised with emotions. E.g. Youtube-Video "BAUHAUS Why it has to be good." The effort is high. If it is well done, however, you have the only type of advertising that is clicked on voluntarily.

4. The **company or product history**

Should always be available as a self-portrayal. Values and self-image (traditional, young, innovative, etc.) are objectified as development history.

For 1. and 2. it is particularly effective to start with problems that had to be overcome.

How do you tell a good story?

A story should captivate and remain in memory. For this the production company needs a person as the leading actor! No product, no machine can really reach the emotions of the customer. If a character has a motive and a goal, you can fever with it.

Superstructure

The hero's journey: The American myth researcher Joseph Campbell had noticed certain similarities in the stories of different peoples. From this he derived the basic structure of the 'Hero's Journey', which can be found in many books (Odyssey, Harry Potter) or movies (Star Wars). The plot is divided into three stages. BEGINNING - MIDDLE - END.

- **START**
The heroine in the familiar world and the call of adventure. First you experience Anna K. in her existence (age, family, job). But there's already a shortage. Something is missing or there is a longing (healthy living).
- **CENTRE**
A point of no return, the adventure begins, friends and enemies. Anna puts it in her head, she is supported, gives everything, fails (peak of tension).
- **CONCLUSIONS**
The final change for the better and recognition of the heroic deed. Anna finds a new recipe and the company thanks her.

Narrative voice

In the case of Anna K., it is a mixture of narrative voices. There is the personal narrative voice "... it worms Anna K...".

But also the general narrative perspective "...in the new technology centre that PizGO has built up for the continuous improvement of its products" and "Thank you, Anna!

This seemingly neutral narrative perspective is often used in company or product stories. Company histories are presented on the basis of successes, product histories often on the basis of setbacks. For example, an employee of the company can tell with a "I" voice how difficult it was to develop the new product.

In the reference report, the first-person vote is usually used ("I recommend the product...").

This also explains why an interview – often used in field reports – is rarely exiting. There is no tension between beginning, middle, end and hardly any surprises.

The fictional narrative is open to all perspectives, it can also only be worked with images and music.

How do you communicate the story?

The means of communication of a story are language, image, sound and film. This applies both to the company's website and the customer magazine, newsletter and social media. Which media are used depends on the goal, the target group and the type of campaign.

There can either be a direction, from the company to the customers, or there can be an opportunity for interaction.

Companies are increasingly trying to include their target group. This ranges from comments in the company's own blog to user entries on the Facebook page to raffle campaigns (Coca Cola awarded free tickets for the premiere of Skyfall if certain obstacles were overcome within a few seconds) or viral marketing (millions of clicks for Google India). The interactive storytelling, in which the users become actors, can also work with a graphic (e.g. with mouseover for multimedia content) or a quiz.

There are no limits to the future of storytelling towards storyliving, i.e. making the stories personal and tangible.

Further information

- Uber Taxi Uses [Big Data of Customers](#)
- Pepsi kidnapped in [augmented reality](#)
- Daimler works with an [influencer](#) (dog) in the 360° video
- Energy bar Cliff Bar integrates the user via clickable links ([Liquid Storytelling](#))
- Columbia Outdoor used geotargeting to record the user's location, select the current weather and show the user a cloud or sun motif associated with an invitation to buy flip-flops or rain jackets.

Positive Error Culture

By Eve Müller

Occasions

- Analysis of your own conversational style
- Development of a strategy for corporate communication
- Preparation of a difficult/conflict conversation

Outcomes

- Can evaluate an established error culture.
- Can name own fields of development in dealing with mistakes.
- Can outline a workable plan for dealing with similar mistakes.

Application

Past mistake

- Please outline a mistake that has happened to you in your everyday professional life and which you can still remember (e.g. actors and incidents).

Established mistake culture

- How did you handle this mistake in your team/project? Evaluate the established error culture using the four aspects: Searching for guilt or causes; punishment or improvement; negative emotion or objectivity; togetherness or antagonism.

Fields of development

- What exactly would you describe as improvable behaviour on your part in dealing with mistakes?

Solution proposal

- How do you behave the next time you get into such a situation to follow the principles of a positive error culture?

Impulses

Errors around mistakes

- ~~Bad luck!~~
Mistakes are not predetermined by luck or bad luck, but are caused by humans.
- ~~Failures are fateful!~~
Mistakes can have serious consequences. However, a fatal course is not due to fate, but to a bad handling of mistakes.
- ~~Guilty parties must be sought and punished!~~
If culprits are sought, personalisation and emotionalisation take place. The danger of repetition errors is great. In order to get to the bottom of the problem, the causes of the mistakes must be identified and corrected.

Positive error culture

A culture of error usually develops by chance as a result of many years of cooperation between different people within a social unit - be it a family, a circle of friends or a company. These error cultures can develop very differently depending on the area of life, since they are largely determined by their members. Companies are increasingly striving not to leave the culture of error to chance, but to consciously design it constructively.

[Interactive Resource - Presentation "Aspects of a Positive Error Culture"]

Elke Schüttelkopf defines a total of three pillars of error culture. In addition to values and norms - i.e. the guiding principles lived in dealing with mistakes - and the necessary mental, emotional, social and methodical competencies of the employees, it is especially the instruments at company level that are decisive for whether competent employees can implement the desired values and norms. The following dimensions are important here:

- **A basis of trust** should be built up in the company that makes objective solution orientation possible in a dialogue based on partnership.
- Particularly expensive or risky mistakes should be avoided as far as possible. A high level of **error avoidance** is achieved in particular through expert error perception and effective error prevention.
- With a high level of **error-friendliness**, errors and error situations are consciously promoted. Allowing such situations makes it possible to advance innovation and learning processes.
- The extent to which employees **develop new skills determines to a large extent** the organisational maturity for learning, which creates innovative knowledge and potential for success through problem analysis and willingness to change.

In order to assess the quality of an established culture of error, all three pillars (values and norms, competences, instruments) must be taken into account. The intention to implement constructive error management remains ineffective if the necessary skills and instruments are lacking. On the other hand, even the best instruments are not sufficient if there is a lack of approval and implementation capability.

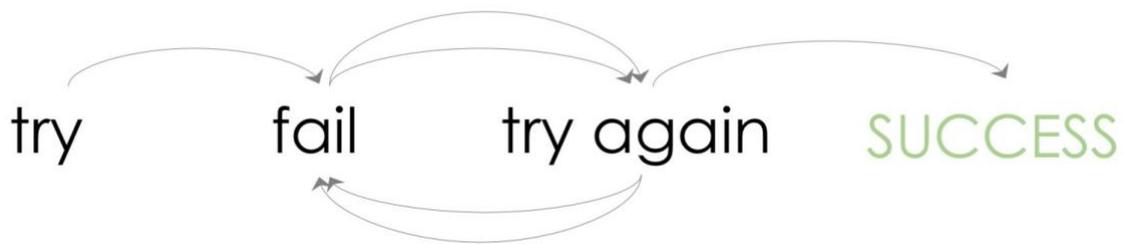
Effective error management requires a positive error culture:

"Even establishing a good system can be a mistake if no corresponding error culture is lived. Well meant, but the wrong way." (Hochreither).

Mistakes as an opportunity

Hand on your heart: Even in a positive error culture, nobody is happy about a mistake! Nevertheless, mistakes have not only a negative but also a positive side. Mistakes often turn out to be opportunities if they are dealt with constructively and improvements are derived. Particularly in innovation management, mistakes are part of the daily routine and usually

prove to be useful afterwards. The *trial and error* method represents such a constructive handling of errors in an ideal way:



In order to achieve a given goal, a try is made. This attempt can be directly successful, but it can also fail. It is important to learn from the mistakes made, to evaluate them in a solution-oriented way and to try again. This supposedly recurring process ultimately leads to success (SUCCESS).

In this sense: Good try!

[Further information](#)

Claudi Schmidt talks about the special advantages of a positive error culture for change processes in the company in the following video:

<https://youtu.be/hd4dHsajq-s>

Sources

Demir, E. (2014). *The ideal handling of mistakes (in organisations) through a constructive culture of mistakes and organisational learning*. GRIN Publishers.

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