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Aligning IT Investments with Business Strategy

Ideas for Managing Competing Priorities Through
Structure, Governance & Agile Execution

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Navigating Competing Priorities in the Modern IT Landscape 〉

Companies are evolving fast, creating complexity, initiative overload, and competition for resources.

- AI & Automation
- Cloud & DevOps
- Cybersecurity & Data Governance
- Analytics & Platforms

Modern IT Organizations are managing:
- 100+ active projects
- 6-8 critical technology domain
- Dozens of business stakeholders, each with their own URGENT demands

CIOs & IT Leaders Must Be:

- **Strategists** – Align IT to shifting business goals
- **Customer Experts** – Clearly aligned to customer needs and desires
- **Portfolio Managers** – Prioritize investments, manage capacity
- **Change Agents** – Deliver value with speed and agility
- **Risk Stewards** – Ensure resilience, compliance, and trust

IT & Technology are no longer a support function, they're a strategic enabler… or a blocker

What do all of these have in common?

"You've invested in the cool new thing...without being clear on the business outcome you're trying to achieve"

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Let's look at some technology relevant examples

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VS.

Initiative Goal:
"Bring AI into the organization"

Action:
Procured AI platforms, ran scattered POCs in HR, Finance, and Customer Service

Investment:
$5M+

Outcome:
"Some AI" across teams, unclear ROI, underused tools

Business Impact:
Minimal. IT seen as "playing with tech."

Initiative Goal:
"Revolutionize internal content management using AI"

Action:
Built an AI-powered search and classification engine for document management

Investment:
$2.5M

Outcome:
60% faster document retrieval; 1,500 hours saved/month; improved compliance tracking

Business Impact: Real productivity gains; recognized by leadership as value-driver

"Technology is not the strategy. The real differentiator is defining clear business outcomes and aligning every tech investment to measurable impact."

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VS.

Initiative Goal:
"Reduce technical debt"

Action:
Launched internal code cleanup across multiple microservices without a central goal

Investment:
$3.2M over 12 months

Outcome: Cleaner codebase; no visible user or performance impact; dev team satisfaction improved

Business Impact: Minimal—seen as background maintenance, questioned by CFO

Initiative Goal: "Overhaul customer onboarding platform to reduce latency and support 3x future volume growth"

Action: Targeted refactoring of onboarding flow, simplified APIs, removed legacy auth dependencies

Investment:
$1.8M over 8 months

Outcome: Reduced customer onboarding time by 50%; enabled regional scaling; 25% drop in support tickets

Business Impact: Improved customer conversion; cited in earnings call as infrastructure for market expansion

"Refactoring isn't the problem—aimless refactoring is. When tech investments are tied to outcomes, technical debt becomes strategic advantage."

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Johnson & Johnson Example

From "A Thousand Flowers to Focused Impact"

BEFORE

J&J allowed nearly **900 generative AI use cases** to emerge organically from across the company.

A **central governance board** reviewed these ideas, but many turned out to be **redundant, ineffective, or better suited to other technologies**.

Only **10–15% of use cases were driving ~80% of the value**.

How They Measure Success

1. Deployment Success – Was it implemented effectively?

2. Adoption – Are users actually using it?

3. Business Outcome – Did it move the needle on real business goals?

AFTER

Pivoted to focus only on high-value GenAI use cases—in areas like:

- Drug discovery
- Supply chain risk mitigation
- Internal policy chatbots

De-centralized governance: Instead of a single board, they gave governance authority to business-aligned functions (commercial, supply chain, R&D), allowing smarter decisions on what to scale or shut down.

Examples of High-Impact AI Initiatives

1. Rep Copilot: A GenAI tool that helps sales reps coach on treatments. It started in the Innovative Medicine unit and is now expanding to MedTech.

2. AI-powered internal chatbot: Answers employee questions on benefits/policies—aiming to reduce 10M+ annual service interactions.

3. Drug formulation optimization: Using AI to find the best time to add solvents in drug development.

4. Supply chain risk modeling: AI helps anticipate shortages of raw materials.
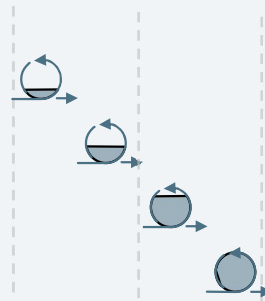
Framework for Success
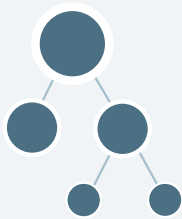
Strategic Alignment
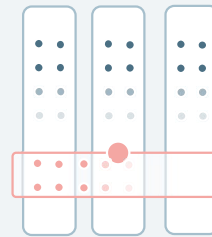
"Clarity at the top, connected at every level"
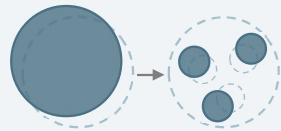
Governance & Prioritization

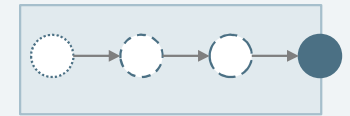*"One intake. One truth. Joint accountability."*

Agile Operating Model & Delivery Process

"Agility at scale with business co-ownership"

Workforce Enablement & Change Management
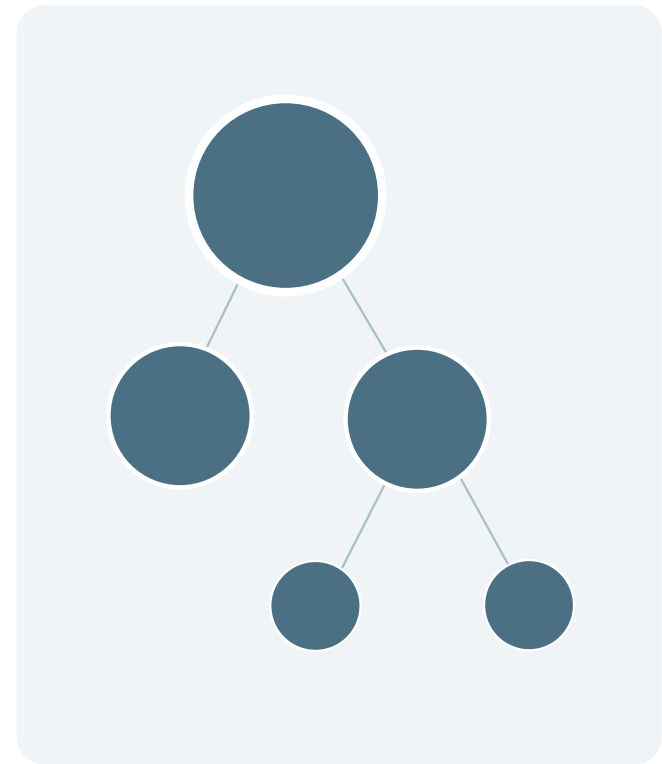
"Skills, mindset, and culture for outcome ownership"
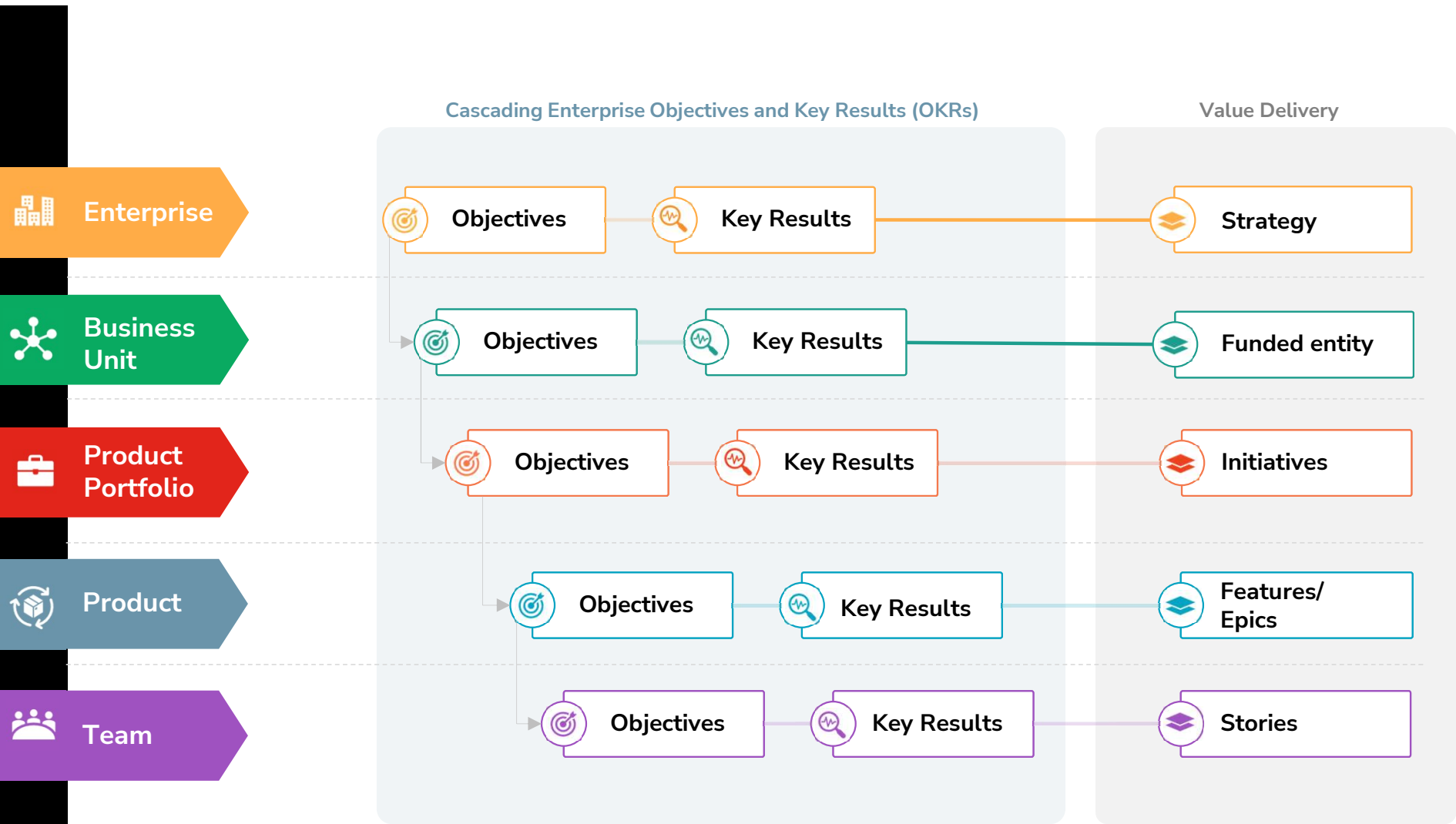
Instrumentation & Tooling

"Real-time visibility for confident, adaptive decisions"

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Strategic Alignment

"Clarity at the top, connected at every level"

- Strategy cascades from enterprise → product → team OKRs

- Initiatives are framed around **business outcomes**, not just tech delivery

- **Transform** investment model to balance priorities

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Cascading Enterprise Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)　　　**Value Delivery**

Level	OKRs		Value Delivery
Enterprise	Objectives	Key Results	Strategy
Business Unit	Objectives	Key Results	Funded entity
Product Portfolio	Objectives	Key Results	Initiatives
Product	Objectives	Key Results	Features/ Epics
Team	Objectives	Key Results	Stories

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Governance & Prioritization

"One intake. One truth. Joint accountability."

- Cross-functional **decision making** (IT + Biz + Finance)

- Business case intake process tied to value delivery

- Single points of standartization

- Regular **portfolio reviews** for reprioritization and scenario planning

"If your initiative is not in this ONE list, it will not get funding"

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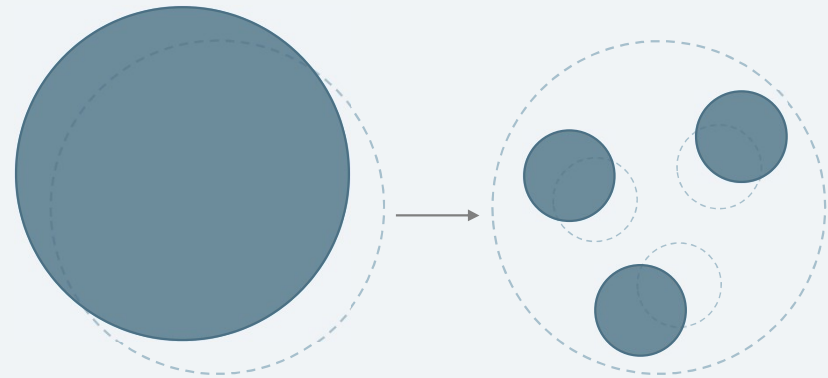
Agile Operating Model & Delivery Process

*"Agility at scale with business co-ownership"*

- **Product- or capability-based team structures**

- Short-cycle planning with embedded security, risk, and architecture investment allocation

- Scaled agile delivery governance with real-time business feedback
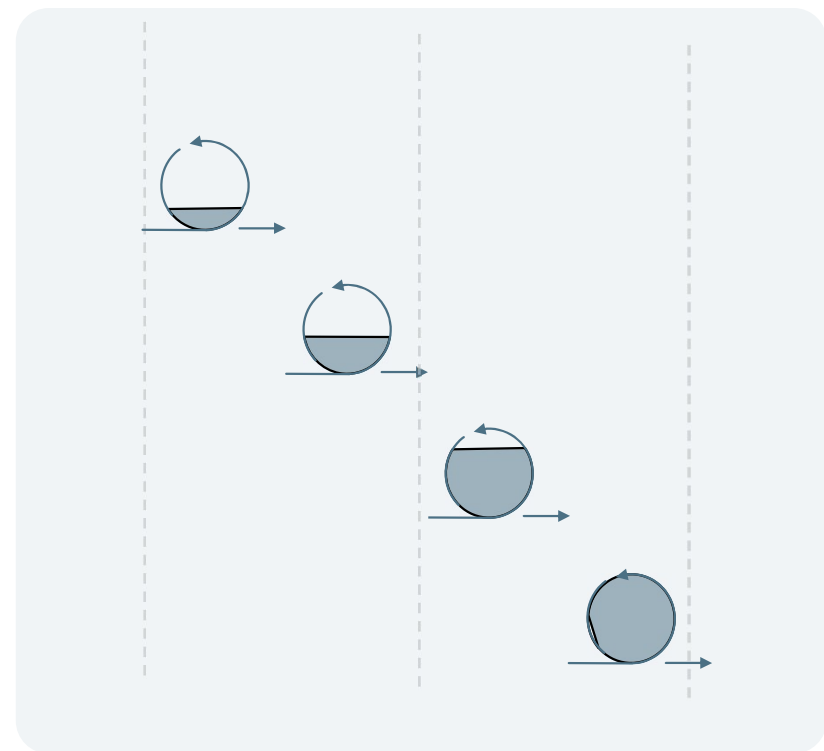
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Workforce Enablement & Change Management

*"Skills, mindset, and culture for outcome ownership"*

- Invest in **cross-functional roles** (e.g., IT business partners, platform owners)

- Mobilize product mindset and product ownership

- Embed **change management disciplines** to support adoption and value realization

- Build leadership muscle in stakeholder management and communication

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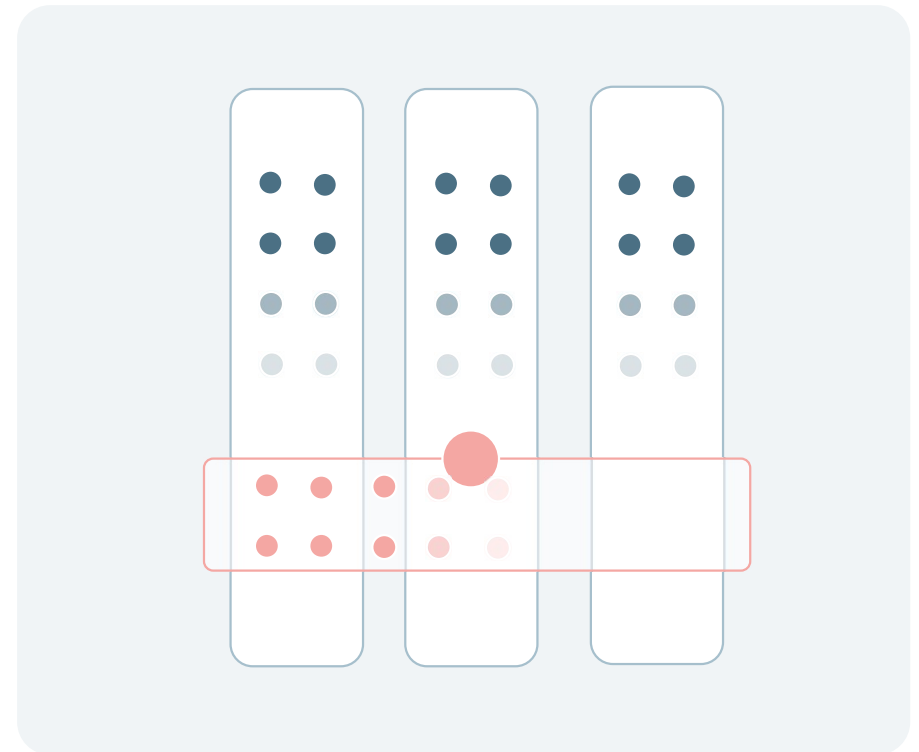
Instrumentation & Tooling

"Real-time visibility for confident, adaptive decisions"

- Tooling for **resource management, scenario modeling, and OKR and work alignment, and status tracking and aggregation**

- Central control tower for managing your portfolio/product: status, risk, ROI tracking

- Analytics on delivery velocity and efficiency, team capacity, and outcome achievement

- Flexible architecture to support new tech (AI, automation, etc.) at the edge

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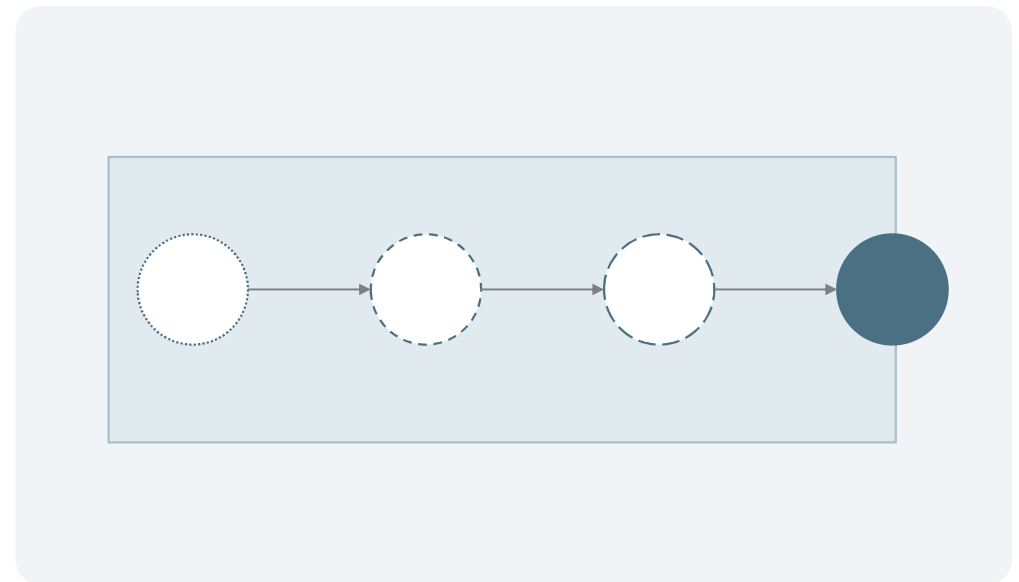
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