Business Diagram LOOK BOOK

25 examples of software-produced business diagrams - explained and illustrated

by Chuck Frey, author of the Mind Mapping Software Blog

the mindmapping softwareblog

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Welcome to the Diagramming Software "Look Book"

Welcome to the Diagramming Software Look Book. Its purpose is to help you understand the types of visuals you can create to communicate your ideas and concepts. My goal is to inspire you with what's possible with diagramming software, and to encourage you to invest in it.

In the following pages, you'll read a brief definition of each diagram type, a sample of what it looks like and links to the diagramming software vendor's website. There, you can learn more about that diagram type, view additional examples and get a better sense of the diagramming software that may meet your needs.

I hope you enjoy learning more about the myriad ways in which you can visually express business information!

Best Regards,

Chuck Frey
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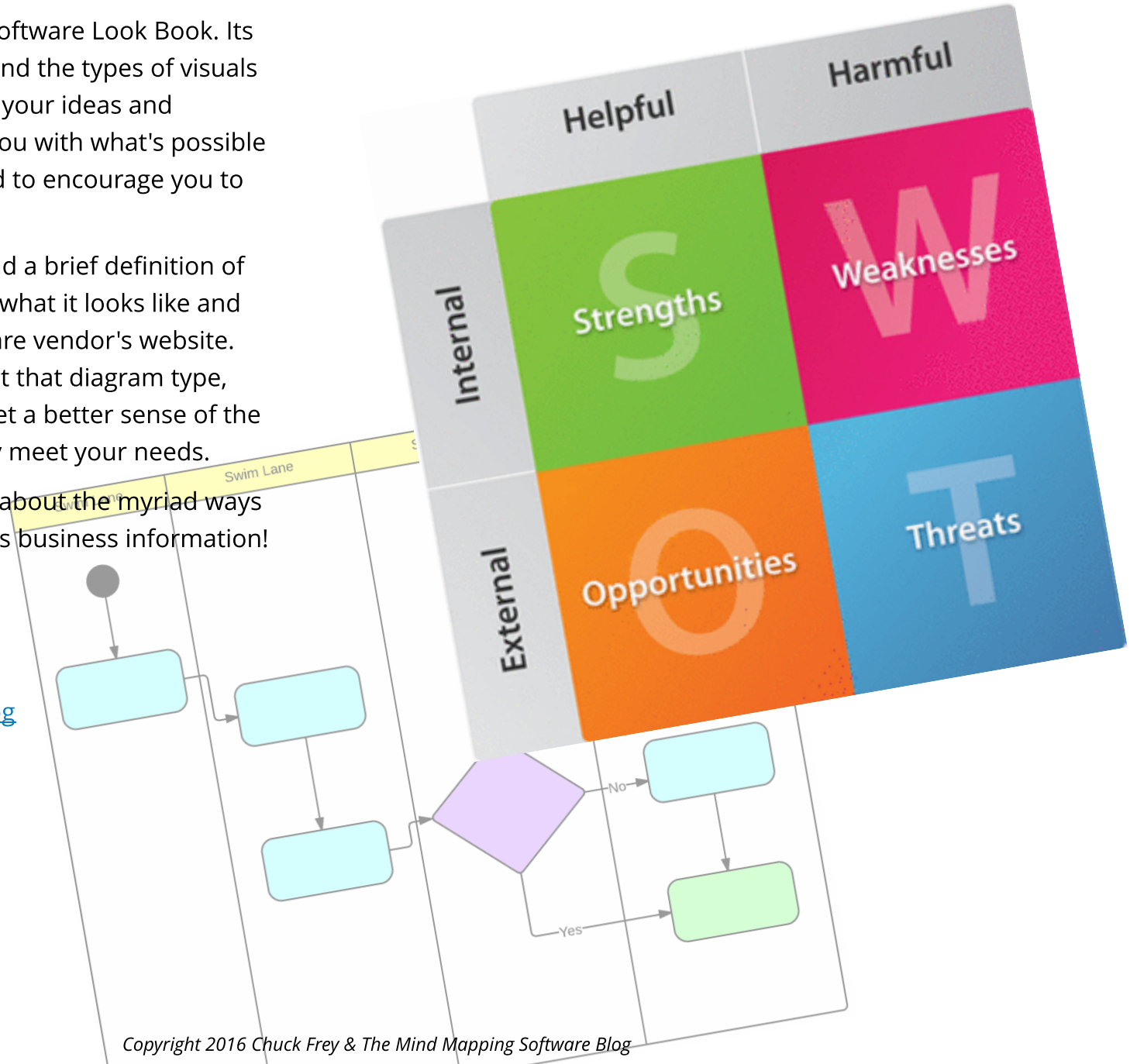

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About the author

Chuck Frey is the publisher and author of The Mind Mapping Software Blog, the web's leading source for news, trends, reviews, tips and resources about all types of visual thinking - including business diagramming. You can contact him at chuck@chuckfrey.com or follow him on Twitter at @chuckfrey.

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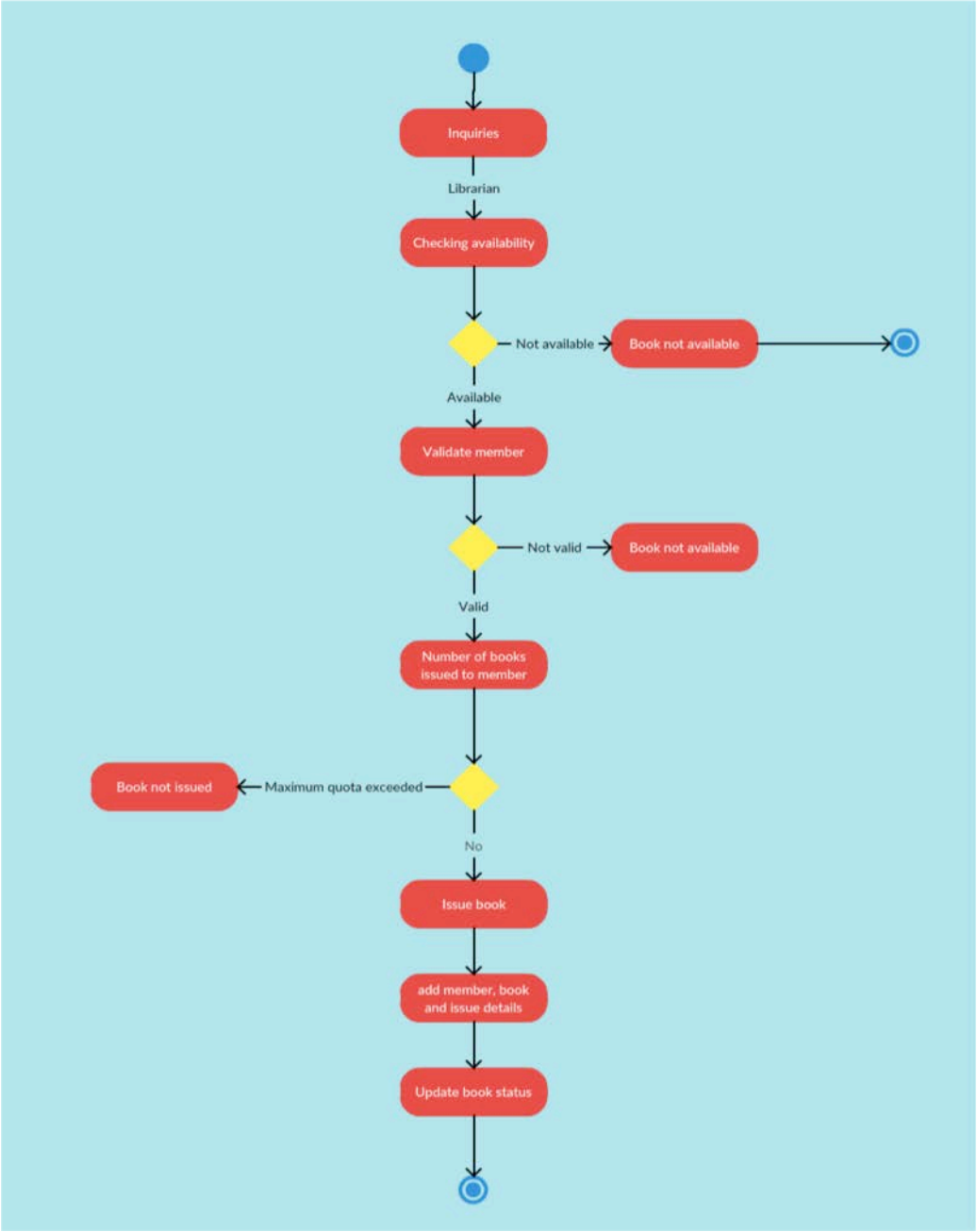
Activity/UML diagram

PURPOSE:

An activity diagram visually presents a series of actions or flow of control in a system similar to a flowchart or a data flow diagram. It uses standardized notation to make them more understandable by others.

Activity diagrams are often used in business process modeling. They can also describe the steps in a use case diagram. In addition, they are widely used as UML diagrams for software design. UML stands for Unified Modeling Language. It provides a standard way to visualize the design of a system.

Activity diagrams should be used in alignment with other modeling techniques like interaction diagrams and State diagrams. The main reason behind using these diagrams is to model the work flow behind the system being designed.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately UML Diagram Page
- Wikipedia UML Page
- Activity Diagrams – Advantages, Disadvantages and Aplication of Use
- Creately Activity Diagram Templates

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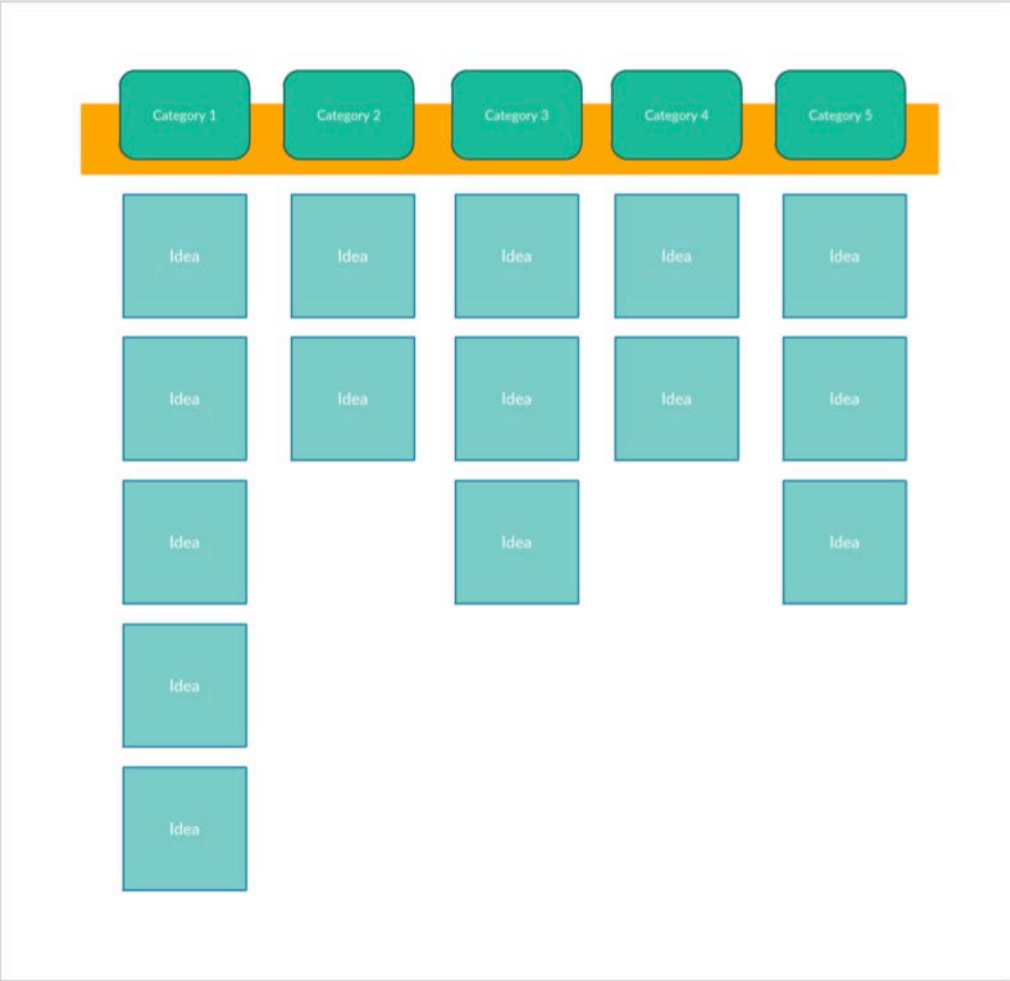
Affinity diagram

PURPOSE:

An affinity diagram shows the relationships between information, opinions, problems, solutions, and issues by placing them in related groups. It allows a broad range of ideas to be organized so they can be more effectively analyzed. It's also known as a KJ diagram.

Affinity diagrams come in handy after a big brainstorming session. Project managers use them to organize a large number of ideas so team members are better able to see the patterns in what's been discussed and help identify potential solutions to problems.

Affinity diagrams often lead to the creation of more detailed cause and effect diagrams.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Affinity Diagram Guide
- Creately Diagram Community
- Affinity Diagram –ASQ

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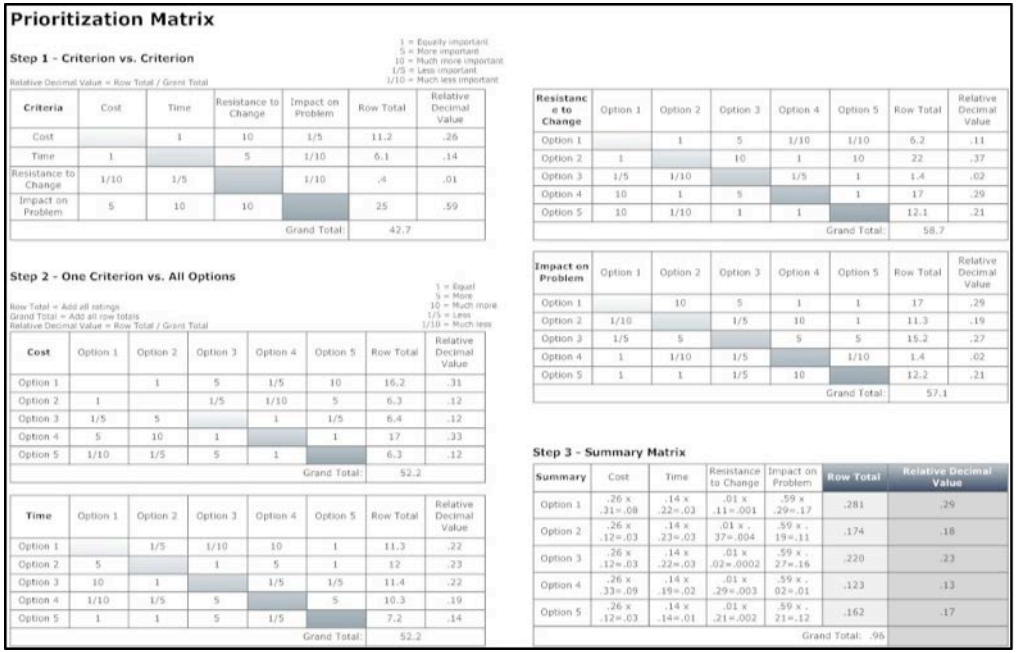
Prioritization matrix

PURPOSE:

This tool is used to prioritize items and describe them in terms of weighted criteria. It uses a combination of tree and matrix diagramming techniques to do a pair-wise evaluation of items and to narrow down options to the most desired or most effective.

Popular applications for the prioritization matrix include return on investment (ROI) or cost–benefit analysis (investment vs. return), and time management matrix (urgency vs. importance).



Prioritization Matrix

Step 1 - Criterion vs. Criterion

1 = Equally important
5 = More important
10 = Much more important
1/5 = Less important
1/10 = Much less important

Relative Decimal Value = Row Total / Grand Total

Criteria	Cost	Time	Resistance to Change	Impact on Problem	Row Total	Relative Decimal Value
Cost		1	10	1/5	11.2	.26
Time	1		5	1/10	6.1	.14
Resistance to Change	1/10	1/5		1/10	.4	.01
Impact on Problem	5	10	10		25	.59
				Grand Total:	42.7	

Step 2 - One Criterion vs. All Options

1 = Equal
5 = More
10 = Much more
1/5 = Less
1/10 = Much less

Row Total = Add all ratings
Grand Total = Add all row totals
Relative Decimal Value = Row Total / Grand Total

Cost	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Row Total	Relative Decimal Value
Option 1		1	5	1/5	10	16.2	.31
Option 2	1		1/5	1/10	5	6.3	.12
Option 3	1/5	5		1	1/5	6.4	.12
Option 4	5	10	1		1	17	.33
Option 5	1/10	1/5	5	1		6.3	.12
					Grand Total:	52.2	

Time	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Row Total	Relative Decimal Value
Option 1		1/5	1/10	10	1	11.3	.22
Option 2	5		1	5	1	12	.23
Option 3	10	1		1/5	1/5	11.4	.22
Option 4	1/10	1/5	5		5	10.3	.19
Option 5	1	1	5	1/5		7.2	.14
					Grand Total:	52.2	

Resistance to Change	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Row Total	Relative Decimal Value
Option 1		1	5	1/10	1/10	6.2	.11
Option 2	1		10	1	10	22	.37
Option 3	1/5	1/10		1/5	1	1.4	.02
Option 4	10	1	5		1	17	.29
Option 5	10	1/10	1	1		12.1	.21
					Grand Total:	58.7	

Impact on Problem	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Row Total	Relative Decimal Value
Option 1		10	5	1	1	17	.29
Option 2	1/10		1/5	10	1	11.3	.19
Option 3	1/5	5		5	5	15.2	.27
Option 4	1	1/10	1/5		1/10	1.4	.02
Option 5	1	1	1/5	10		12.2	.21
					Grand Total:	57.1	

Step 3 - Summary Matrix

Summary	Cost	Time	Resistance to Change	Impact on Problem	Row Total	Relative Decimal Value
Option 1	.26 x .31=.08	.14 x .22=.03	.01 x .11=.001	.59 x .29=.17	.281	.29
Option 2	.26 x .12=.03	.14 x .23=.03	.01 x .37=.004	.59 x .19=.11	.174	.18
Option 3	.26 x .12=.03	.14 x .22=.03	.01 x .02=.0002	.59 x .27=.16	.220	.23
Option 4	.26 x .33=.09	.14 x .19=.02	.01 x .29=.003	.59 x .02=.01	.123	.13
Option 5	.26 x .12=.03	.14 x .14=.01	.01 x .21=.002	.59 x .21=.12	.162	.17
				Grand Total:	.96	

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Prioritization Matrix Guide
- Lean Six Sigma Project Prioritization Matrix
- Incident priority matrix – IT Process wiki

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SWOT analysis

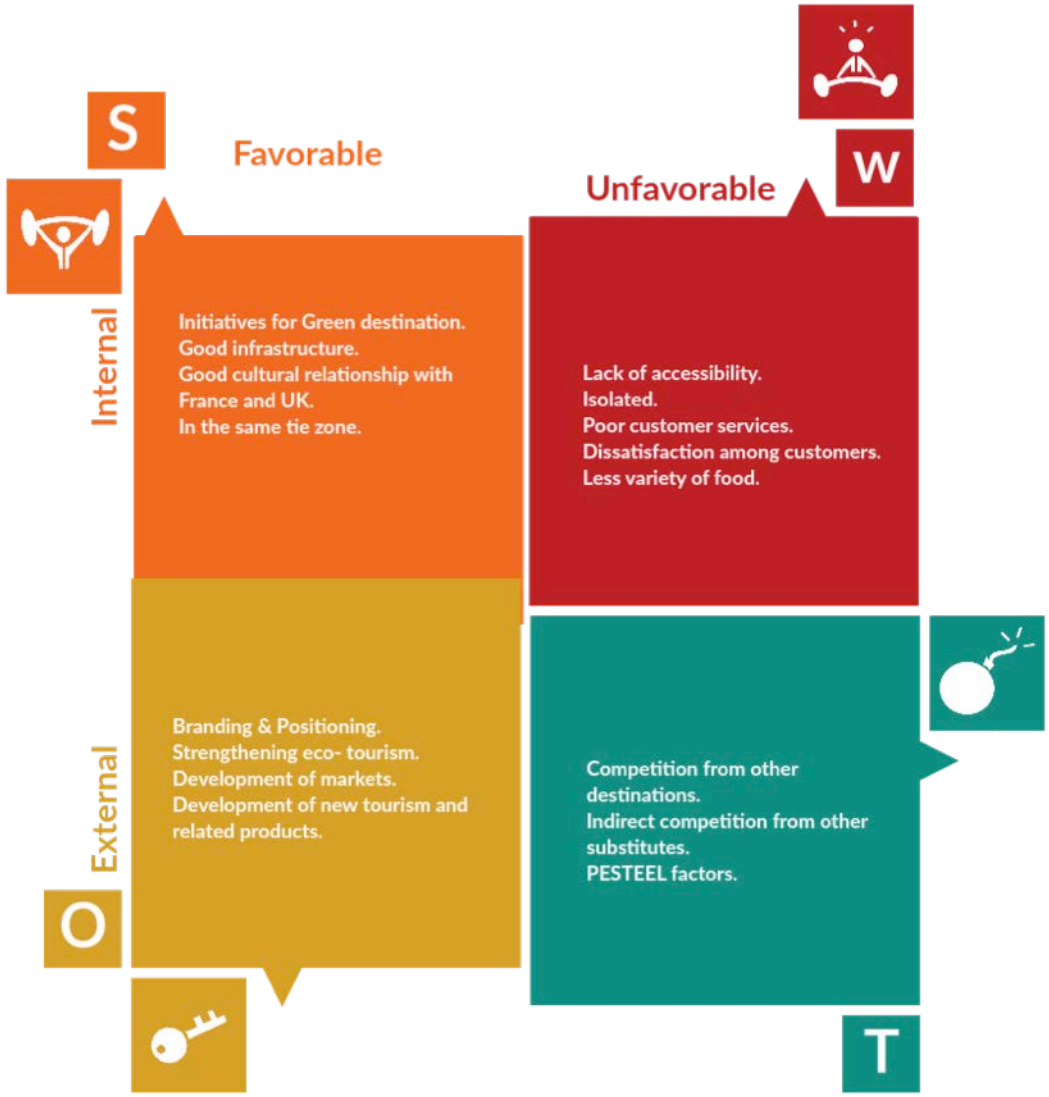
PURPOSE:

A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method that evaluates 4 key elements of a project or business venture: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

SWOT analysis aims to identify the key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving an objective. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

Internal factors – the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization.

External factors – the opportunities and threats presented by the environment external to the organization.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately SWOT Analysis Page
- Creately SWOT Analysis Templates & Examples
- Personal SWOT Analysis to Assess and Improve Yourself

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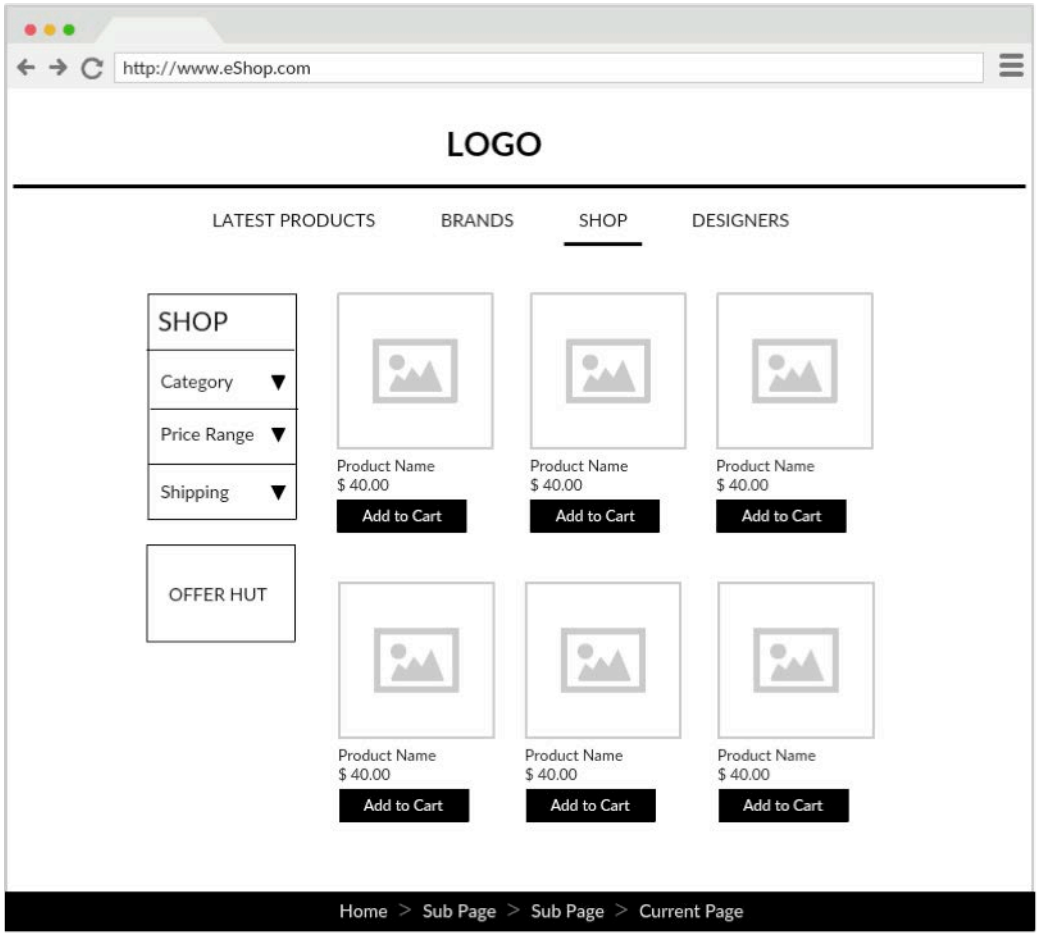
Wireframes and UI mockups

PURPOSE:

A website wireframe is a visual prototype of a web page that focuses on content, layout, and behavior.

It usually doesn't include any styling, color, or graphics. It's like a blueprint to a house that shows the plan for plumbing and electricity without the interior design.

A website wireframe can also show the relationship between pages, allowing you to navigate between a series of mockups with clickable components.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Wireframes & UI Mockups Page
- Creately Wireframes and UI Mockup Examples & Templates
- UI Mockups for Your Website – Creately
- Wireframes Magazine » Creately

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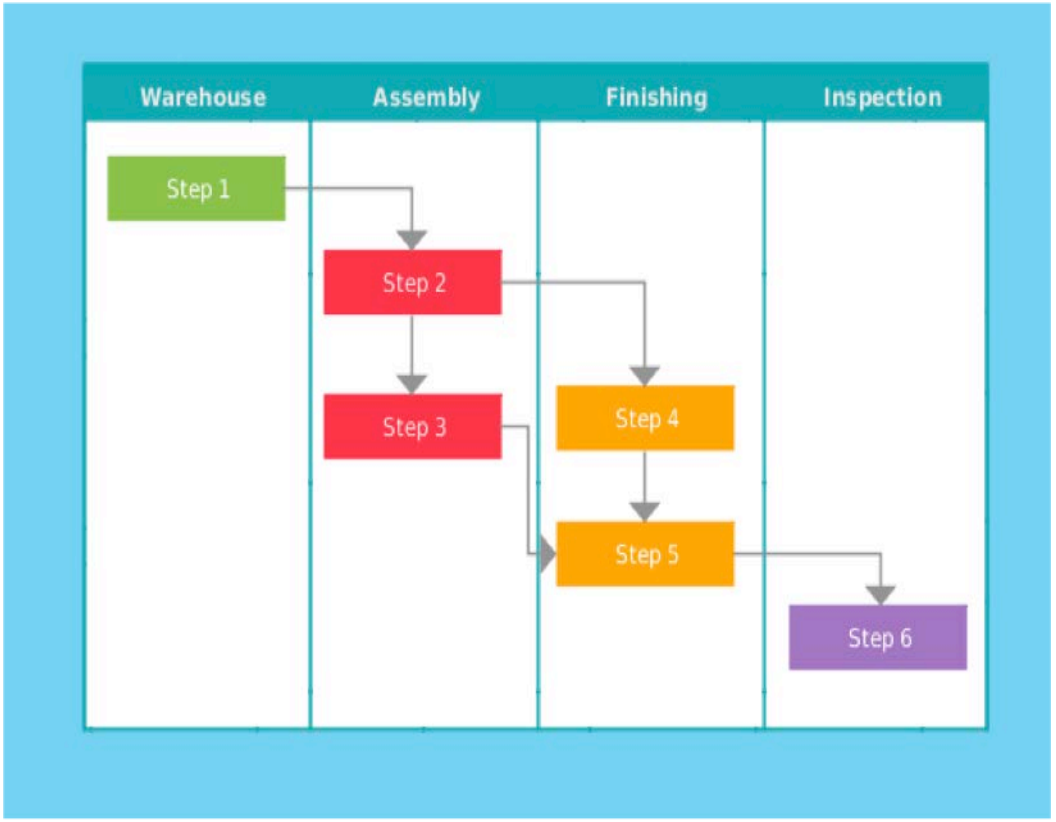
Swim lane process diagram

PURPOSE:

A swim lane (or swimlane diagram) is a visual element used in process flow diagrams, or flowcharts, that visually distinguishes job sharing and responsibilities for sub-processes of a business process. Swim lanes may be arranged either horizontally or vertically.

The swim lane flowchart differs from other flowcharts in that processes and decisions are grouped visually by placing them in lanes. Parallel lines divide the chart into lanes, with one lane for each person, group or subprocess. Lanes are labelled to show how the chart is organized.

Swim lane flowcharts are especially useful in helping teams and project managers visualize hand-offs from one person, team or department to another - a common place where projects break down due to poor communication or misunderstandings.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Swim Lane Diagram Article
- Creately Swim Lane Examples & Templates
- How to Use Cross Functional Flowcharts for Planning

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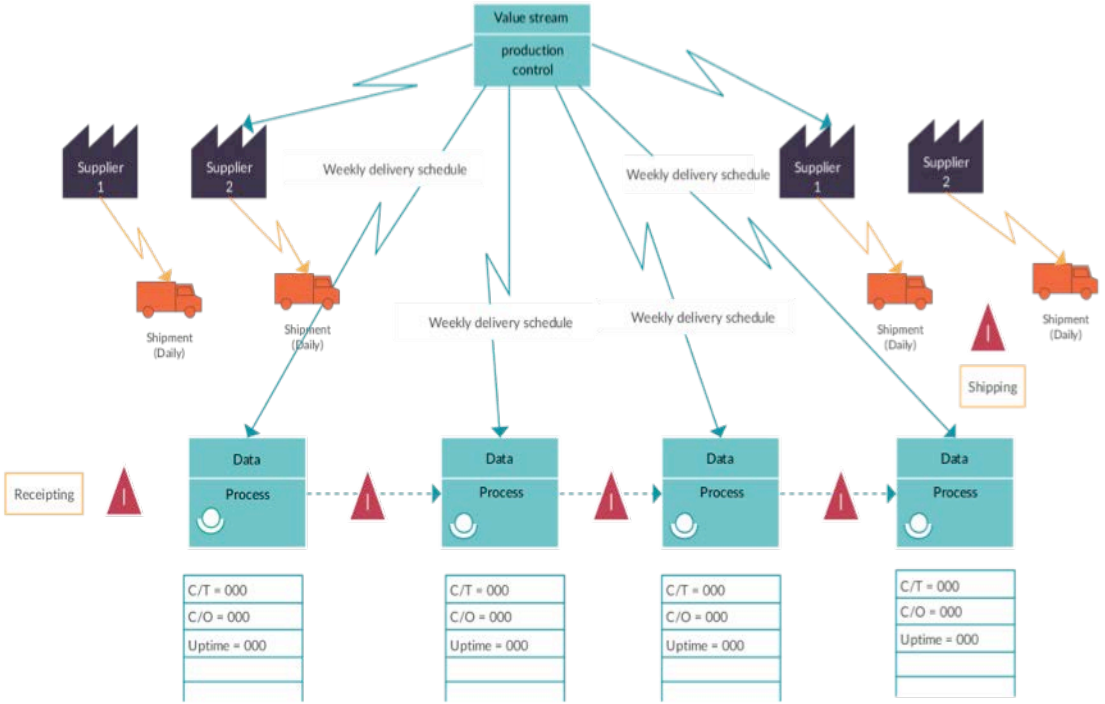
Value stream mapping

PURPOSE:

Value stream mapping (VSM) is a lean manufacturing or lean enterprise technique used to document, analyze and improve the flow of information or materials required to produce a product or service for a customer. VSM helps identify waste and streamline the production process.

A value stream map (AKA end-to-end system map) takes into account not only the activity of the product, but the management and information systems that support the basic process. This is especially helpful when working to reduce cycle time, because you gain insight into the decision making flow in addition to the process flow.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately VSM Webpage
- Creately VSM Templates & Examples
- Creating a Value Stream Maps – Lean Mfg. Tools Blog
- Profitable Applications of VSM – ASQ

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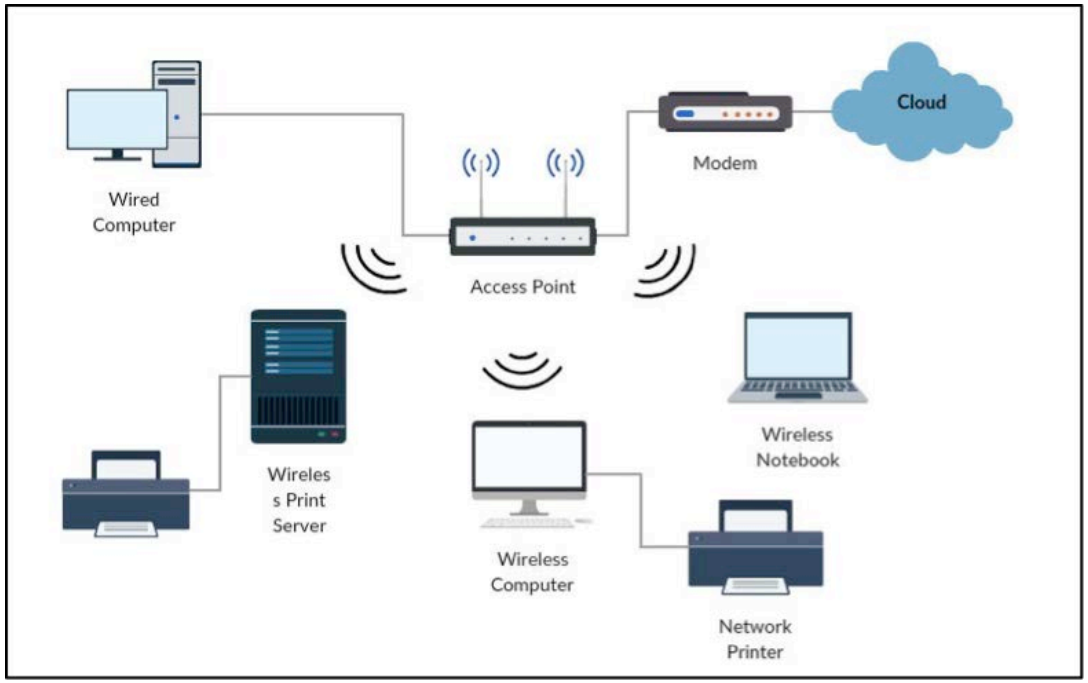
Network (IT) diagram

PURPOSE:

A computer network diagram is a schematic depicting the nodes and connections amongst nodes in a computer network.

Readily identifiable icons are used to depict common network appliances e.g. Router, and the style of lines between them indicate the type of connection. Clouds are used to represent networks external to the one pictured for the purposes of depicting connections between internal and external devices, without indicating the specifics of the outside network.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Network Diagram Web Page
- Creately Network Diagram Examples
- AWS Diagram Examples by Creately
- Cisco Nework Diagram Examples by Creately

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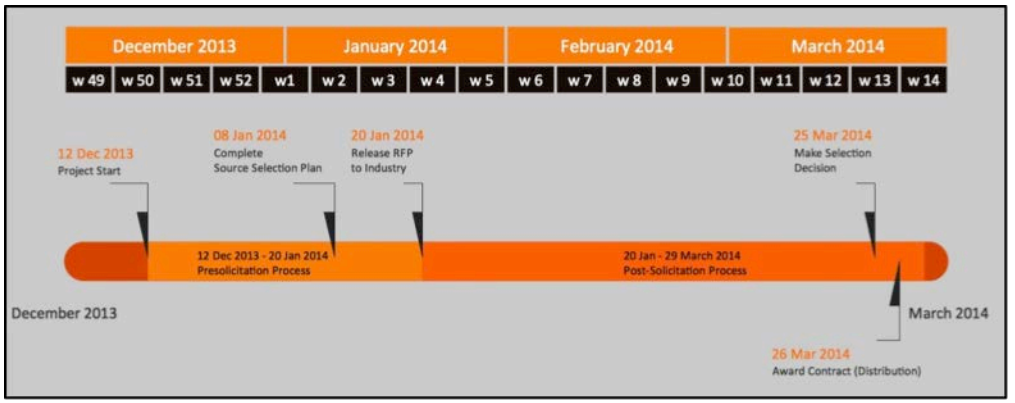
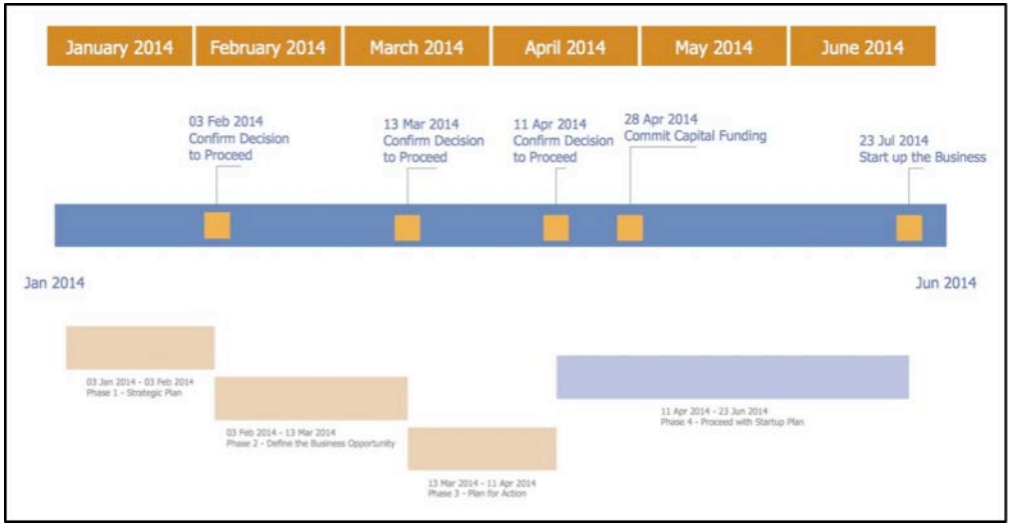
Timeline

PURPOSE:

Timeline diagrams present events during specific intervals shown chronologically along a line. These events may be historic, related to a specific criminal case or business development, or they may be important milestones in a project.

Timelines are designed to provide a broad overview of a sequence of events in time. They don't go into detail, but links to events, information and images may be added as needed.





RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Timeline Diagram Examples
- Timeline Diagram – Wikimedia Commons
- Murdoch & The News Of The World Saga ~ A Visual Timeline

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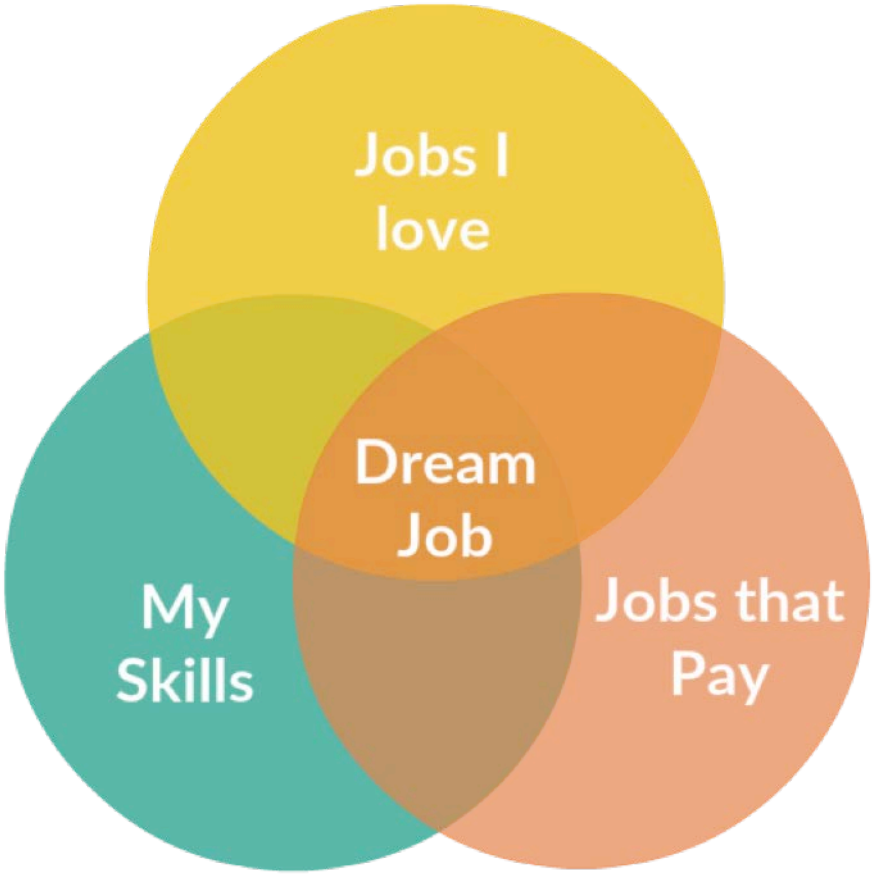
Venn diagram

PURPOSE:

A Venn diagram is an illustration of the relationships between and among sets, groups of objects that share something in common. Usually, Venn diagrams are used to depict set intersections (denoted by an upside-down letter U). This type of diagram is used in scientific and engineering presentations, in theoretical mathematics, in computer applications, and in statistics.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Venn Diagram Maker
- Creately Venn Diagram Examples & Templates
- How to Create a Venn Diagram Easily Using Creately

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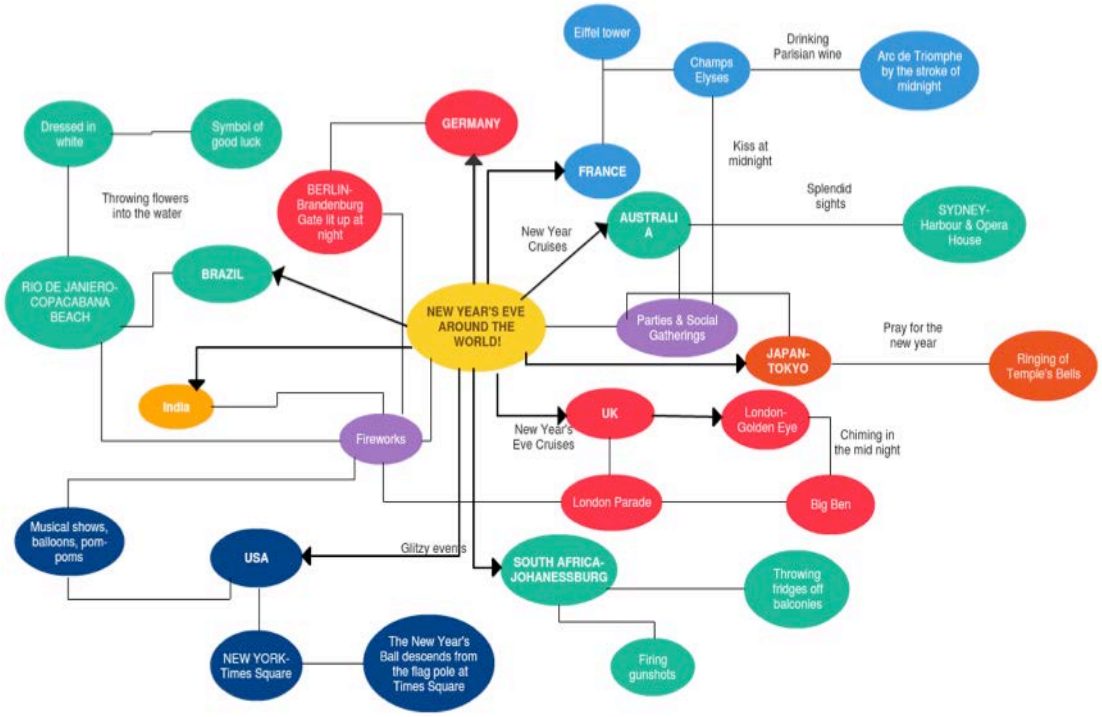
Concept map

PURPOSE:

A concept map is a diagram or graphical tool that visually represents relationships between concepts and ideas. Most concept maps depict ideas as boxes or circles (also called nodes), which are structured hierarchically and connected with lines or arrows (also called arcs). These lines are labeled with linking words and phrases to help explain the connections between concepts.

Linking words or phrases are located on the lines connecting objects in a concept map, and these words describe the relationship between two concepts. They are as concise as possible and typically contain a verb. Examples include "causes," "includes" and "requires."



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Concet Map Web Page
- Creately Concept Map Examples
- What Is a Concpet Map – Wikipedia

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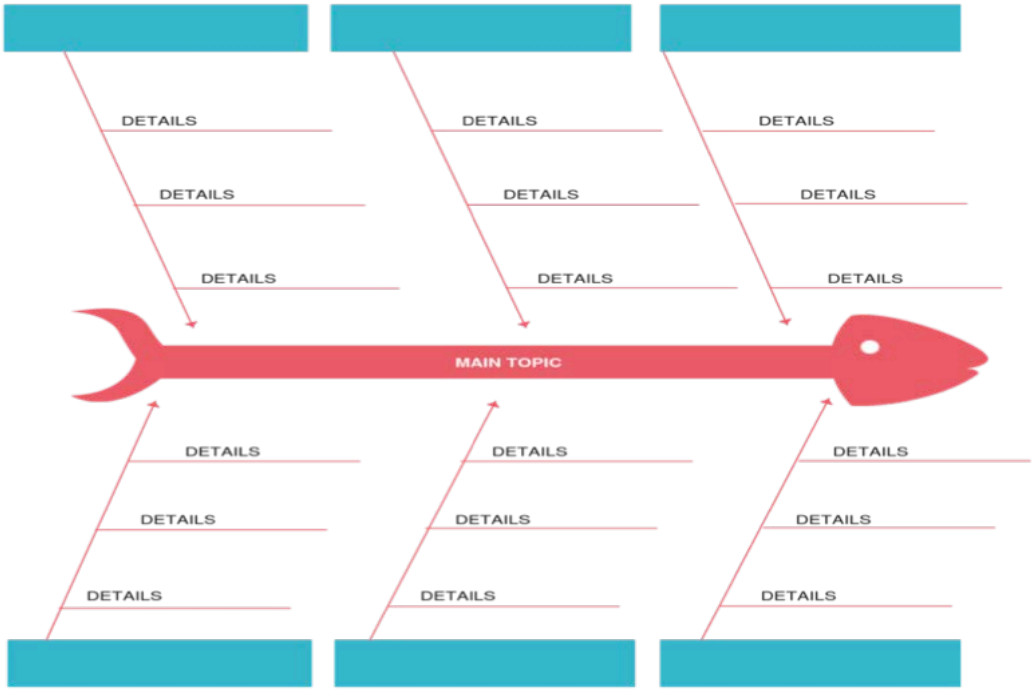
Cause and effect (fishbone) diagram

PURPOSE:

A fishbone diagram is also known as a Ishikawa diagram, after its creator, Kaoru Ishikawa. It is a versatile diagram for mapping out possible contributors to a problem in your business. It is commonly used to identify the root cause of a problem in manufacturing and quality control.

The horizontal "spine" contains the name of the problem. The lines radiating from it are categories of potential causes. Within each category, you can create branching lines to describe sub-causes.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Fishbone Diagram Tutorial
- Creately Fishbone Diagrams – Multiple Examples
- Definition of Fishbone Diagrams (ishikawa)

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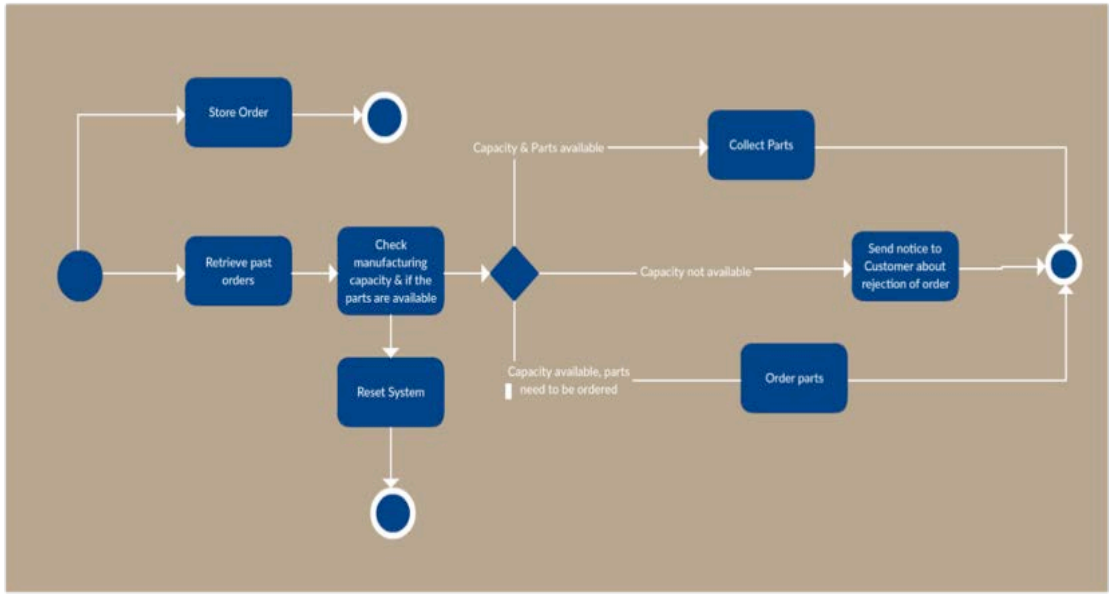
Workflow/business process

PURPOSE:

Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN) is a standard for business process modeling that provides a graphical notation for specifying business processes in a Business Process Diagram (BPD), based on a flowcharting technique very similar to activity diagrams from Unified Modeling Language (UML).



The objective of BPMN is to support business process management, for both technical users and business users, by providing a notation that is intuitive to business users, yet able to represent complex process semantics.

The business objective is often to increase process speed or reduce cycle time; to increase quality; or to reduce costs, such as labor, materials, scrap, or capital costs.

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Business Process Mapping Web Page
- Workflow Management System – The Definition
- BPMN Specification – Business Process Model and Notation

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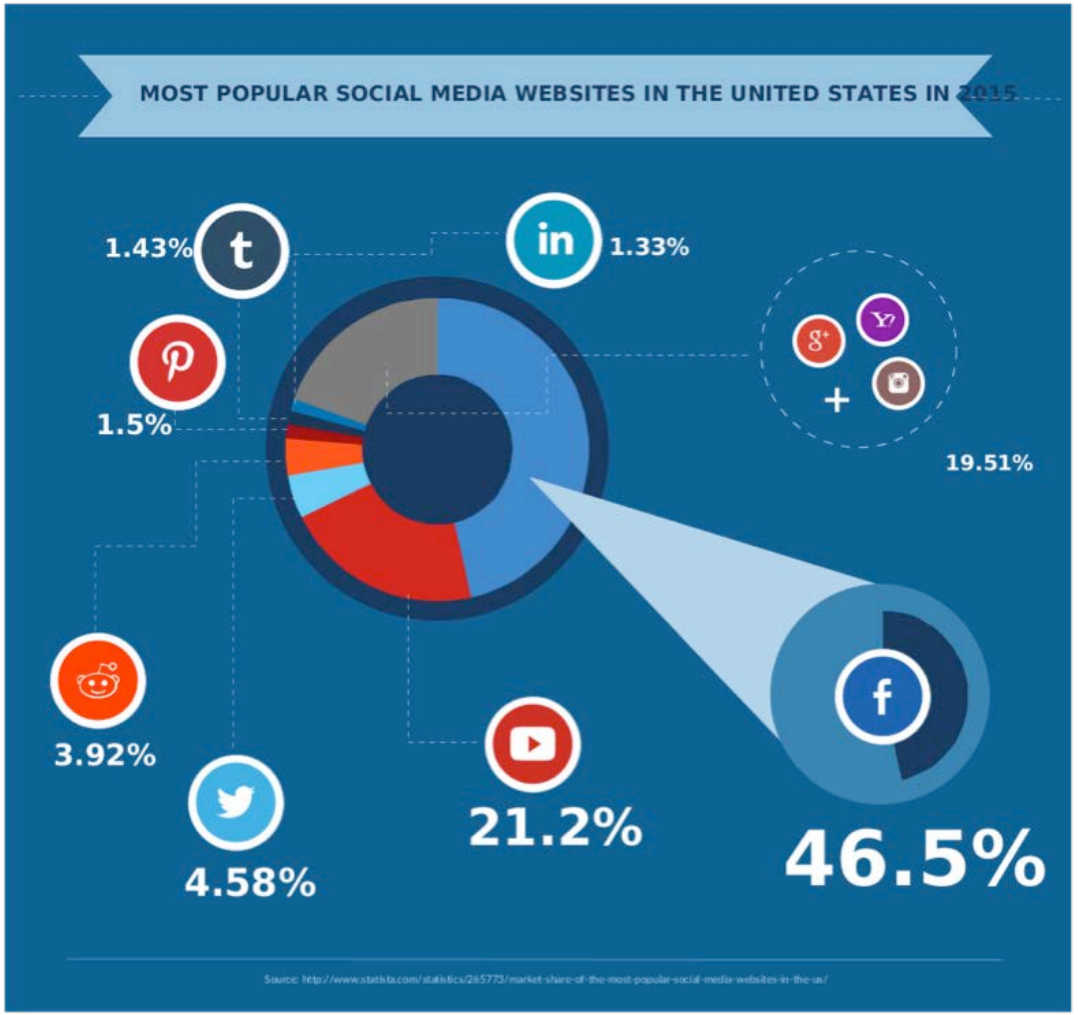
Infographic



PURPOSE:

Information graphics or infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly. They can improve cognition by utilizing graphics to enhance the human visual system's ability to see patterns and trends.

Many businesses use infographics as a tool for communicating with and attracting potential customers.mInformation graphics are a form of content marketing and have become a tool for internet marketers and companies to create content that others will link to, thus possibly boosting a company's reputation and online presence.

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Infographics Page
- Creately Infographic Examples & Templates
- Visual Communication – Future of Marketing

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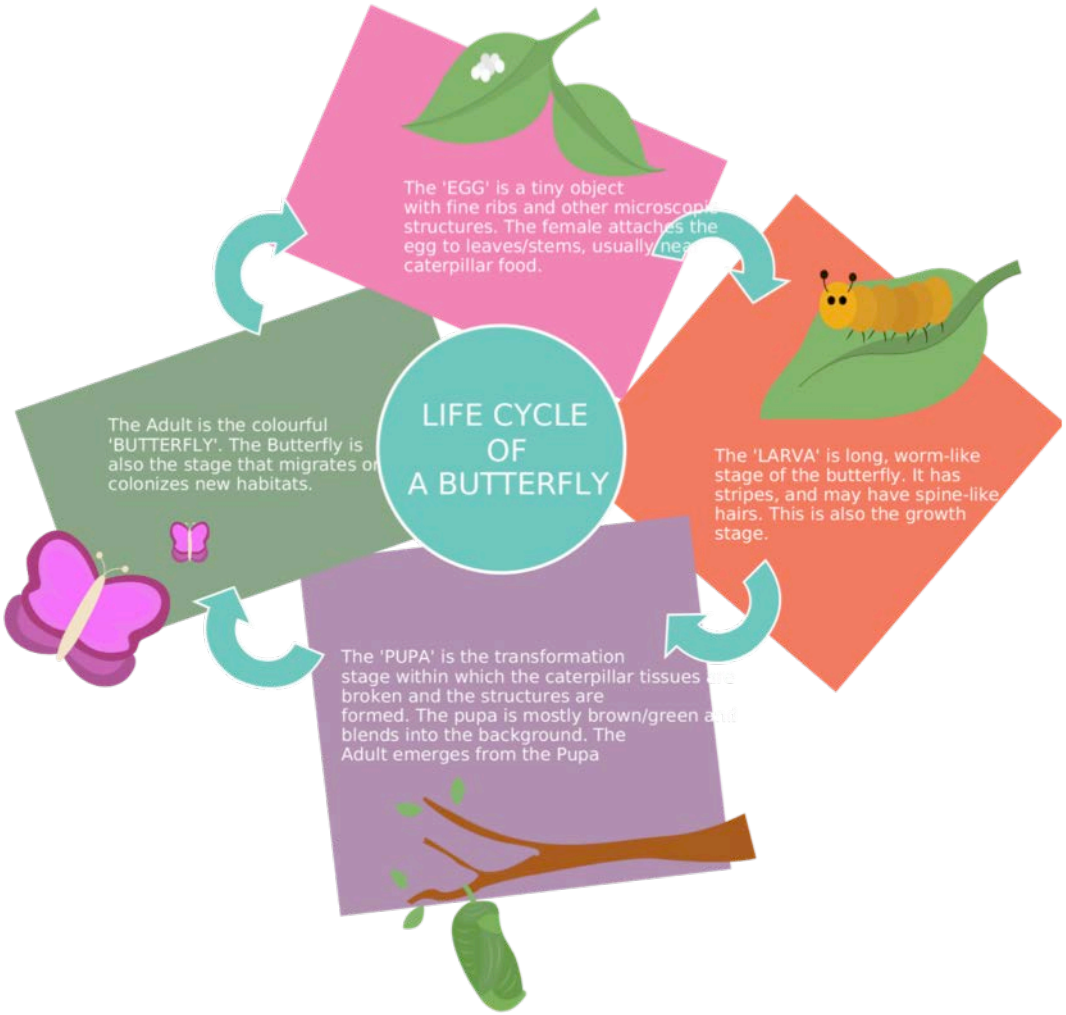
Cycle diagram

PURPOSE:

A cycle diagram is used to represent a continuing sequence of stages, tasks, or events in a circular flow. It emphasizes the stages or steps rather than the connecting arrows or flow.

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Cycle Diagram Examples
- The importance of Graphic Organizers in K–12 Classrooms
- Life of a Butterfly – Cycle Diagram Template



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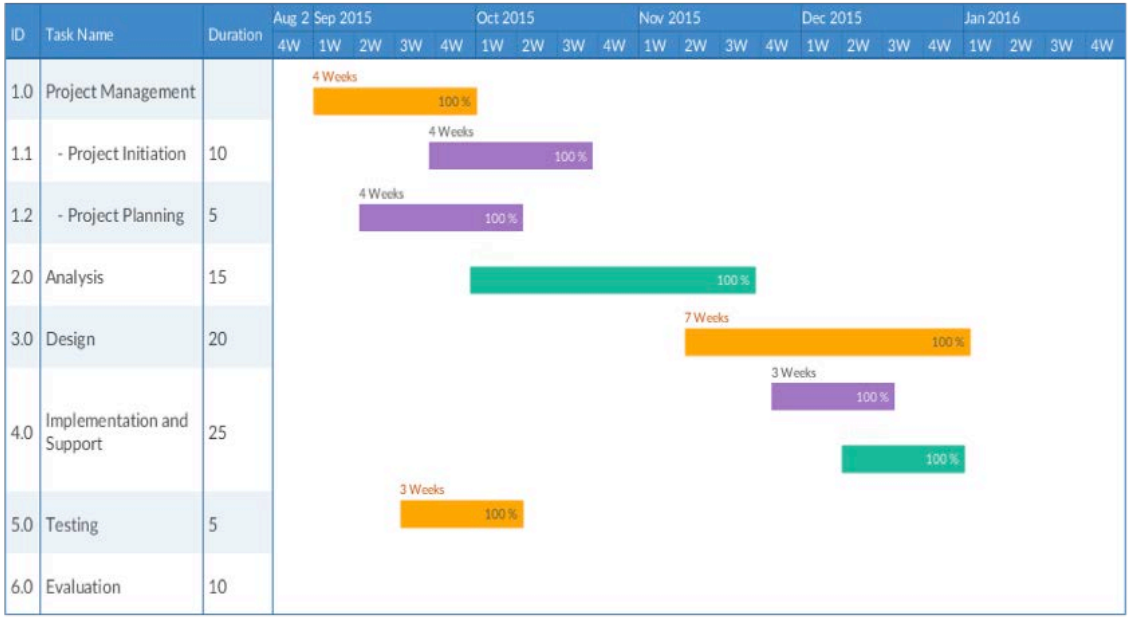
Gantt chart

PURPOSE:

A Gantt chart is a type of bar chart that illustrates a project schedule. Gantt charts illustrate the start and finish dates of the terminal elements and summary elements of a project. Terminal elements and summary elements comprise the work breakdown structure of the project.

Modern Gantt charts also show the dependency (i.e., precedence network) relationships between activities. Gantt charts can be used to show current schedule status using percent complete shadings and a vertical "TODAY" line.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Gantt Chart Web Page
- Creately Gantt Chart Examples
- Gantt Chart Templates to Instantly Create Project Timelines
- How to Use Gantt Chart to Plan a Project

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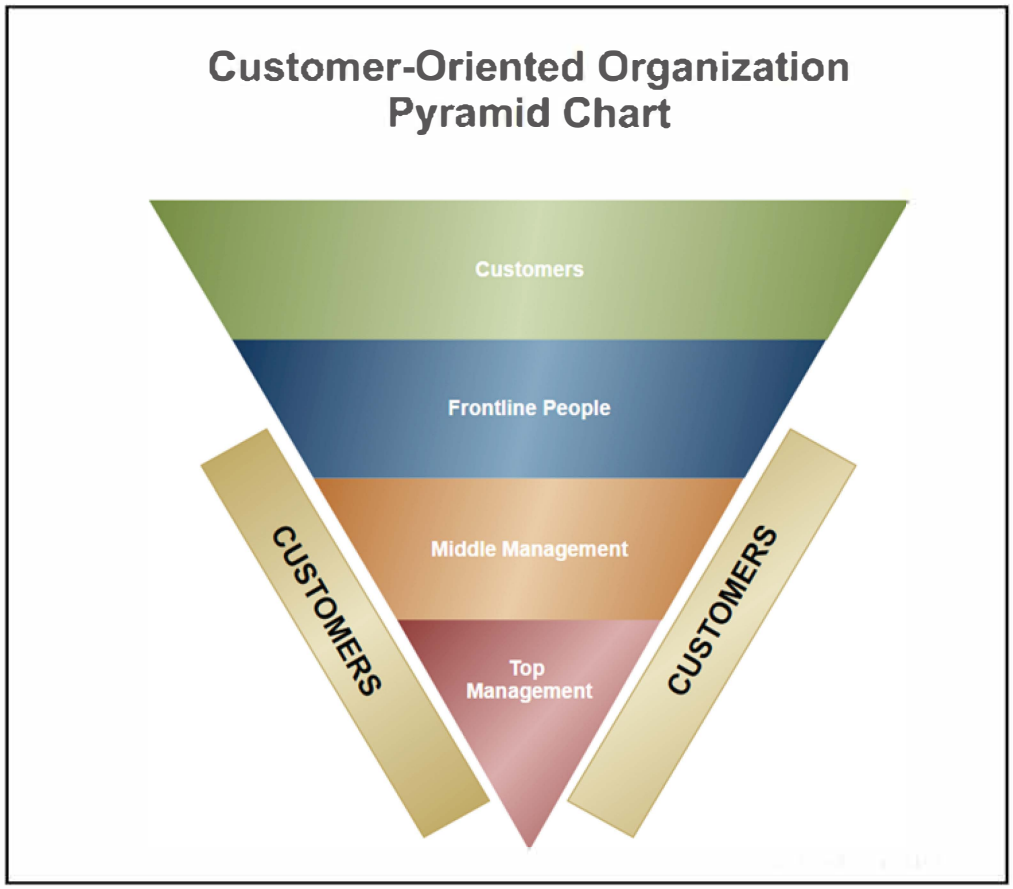
Pyramid chart

PURPOSE:

A pyramid chart has the form of a triangle with lines dividing it into sections. A related topic or idea is placed in each section. Because of the triangular shape, each section is a different width from the others; this width indicates a level of hierarchy among the topics.

For example, the widest section may contain a general topic and the narrowest section may contain a much more specific topic from within that general topic. However, the width is not visually representative of the quantity beyond larger or smaller.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Funnel Chart and Pyramid Chart – Visart – Pagos Wiki

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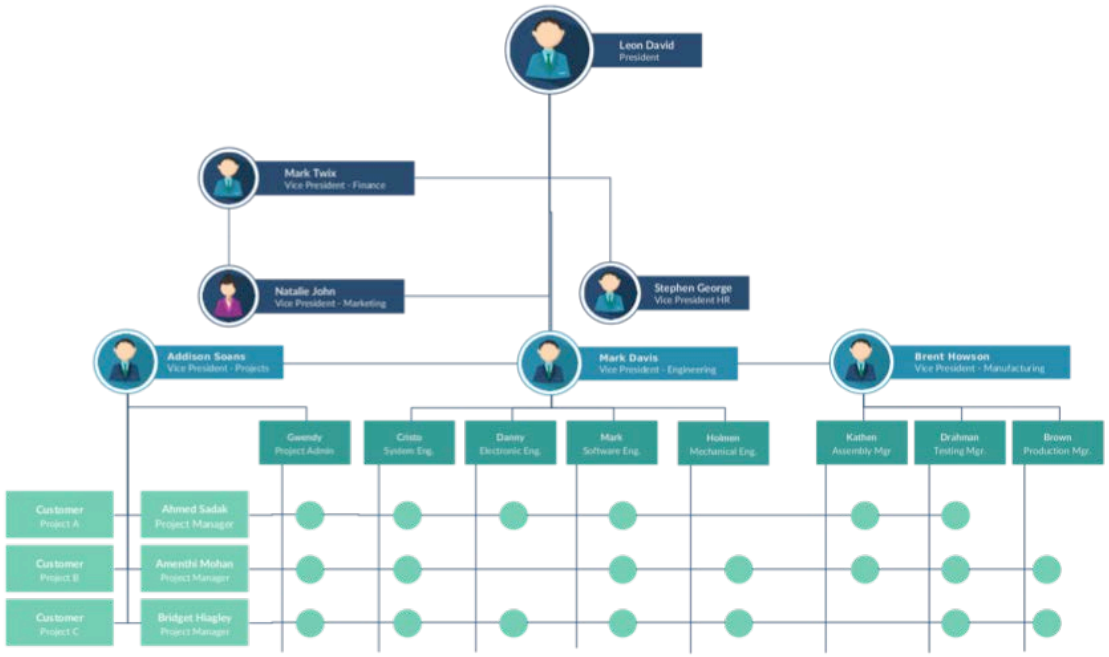
Organizational chart

PURPOSE:

An organization (org) chart is a graphic representation of the structure of an organization, showing the relationships of the positions or jobs within it.

An org chart consists of boxes that represent individuals and their roles and connectors that represent the relationships between them. In most organizations, this is represented by the president or CEO at the top, branching down through layers of direct reports.

A good org chart may also include other helpful information, like contact details, links to departmental pages or sites, and more.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Organizational Chart Web Page
- Creately Org Chart Examples & Templates
- Meaningful Org Organizational Chart Best Practices for Charts
- Types of Organizational Charts for Different Scenarios

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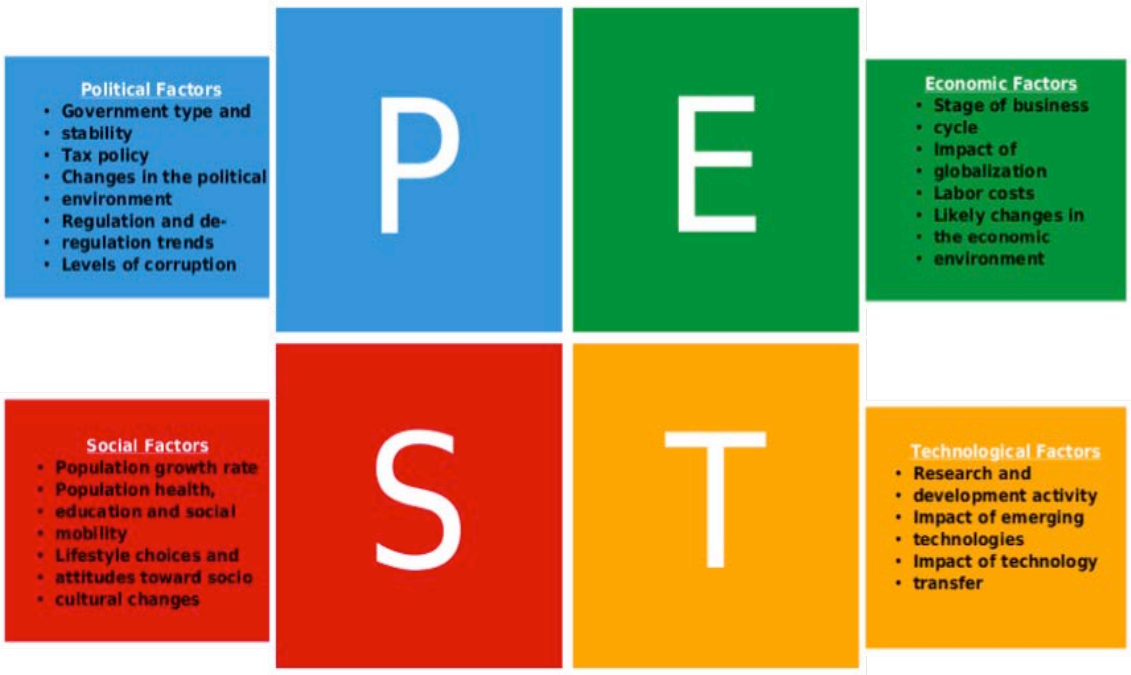
PEST analysis

PURPOSE:

PEST analysis is a framework that categorizes macro-environmental influences in strategic planning. These influences may include political, economic, social and technological forces often used in the environmental scope of this process.

The goal of PEST analysis is to examine the overall impact of each of these categories (and the potential or real correlation with each other) on the business. The results are often used either to take advantage of potential opportunities and/or to make contingency plans for opposing threats when preparing business and strategic plans.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately PEST Analysis Examples
- Definition of PEST Analysis
- SWOT Analysis Vs PEST Analysis and When to Use Them

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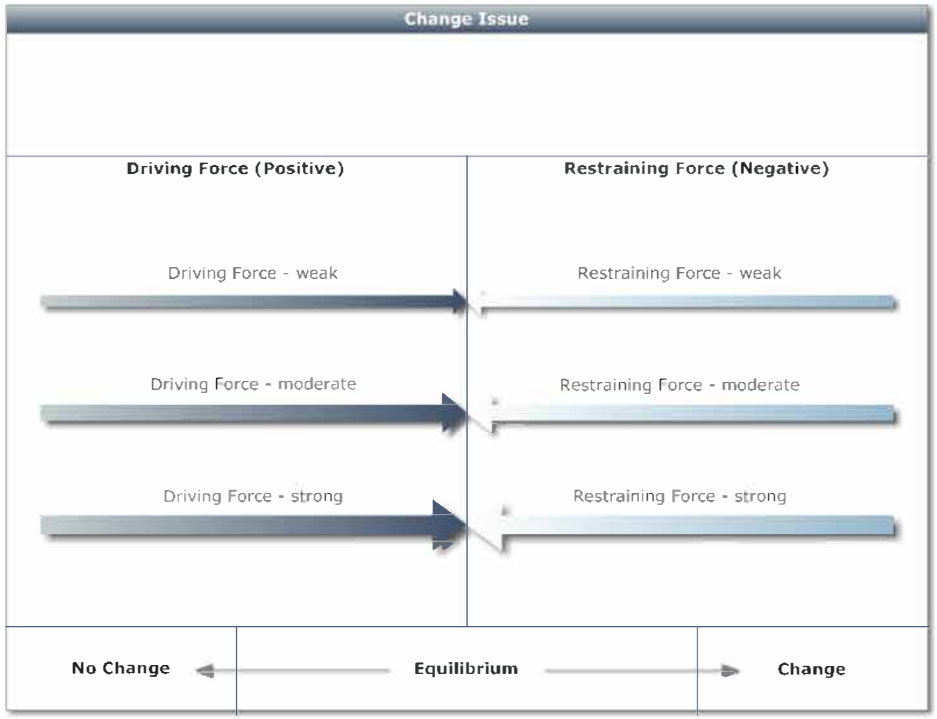
Force field analysis

PURPOSE:

Force Field Analysis is a method for listing, discussing, and evaluating the various forces for and against a proposed change. When a change is planned, Force Field Analysis helps you look at the big picture by analyzing all of the forces impacting the change and weighing the pros and cons. By knowing the pros and cons, you can develop strategies to reduce the impact of the opposing forces and strengthen the supporting forces.

Forces that help you achieve the change are called "driving forces." Forces that work against the change are called "restraining forces." Force Field Analysis can be used to develop an action plan to implement a change. Specifically it can help you determine if a proposed change can get the needed support, identify obstacles to successful solutions and suggest actions to reduce the strength of the obstacles.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Force–Field Analysis
- Force field analysis – Community & Economic Development

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Competitive analysis

PURPOSE:

This tool is used to prioritize items and describe them in terms of weighted criteria. It uses a combination of tree and matrix diagramming techniques to do a pair-wise evaluation of items and to narrow down options to the most desired or most effective.

Popular applications for the prioritization matrix include return on investment (ROI) or cost–benefit analysis (investment vs. return), and time management matrix (urgency vs. importance).

Attributes	Weight (Must Total 100%)	Ratings (Scale = 1-5: 1-Poor, 5-Excellent)				
		Your Company	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3	Competitor 4
Customer awareness	20%	5.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Product quality	35%	4.0	5.0	3.0	2.5	2.5
Product availability	30%	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.5	4.0
Technical assistance	5%	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0
Selling staff	10%	4.0	3.5	2.0	3.0	2.0
Total	100%					
Score (Average)		3.8	3.9	2.9	2.3	2.7

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Competitive Analysis Guide
- A framework for competitor analysis | Michael. E Porter – Academia.edu

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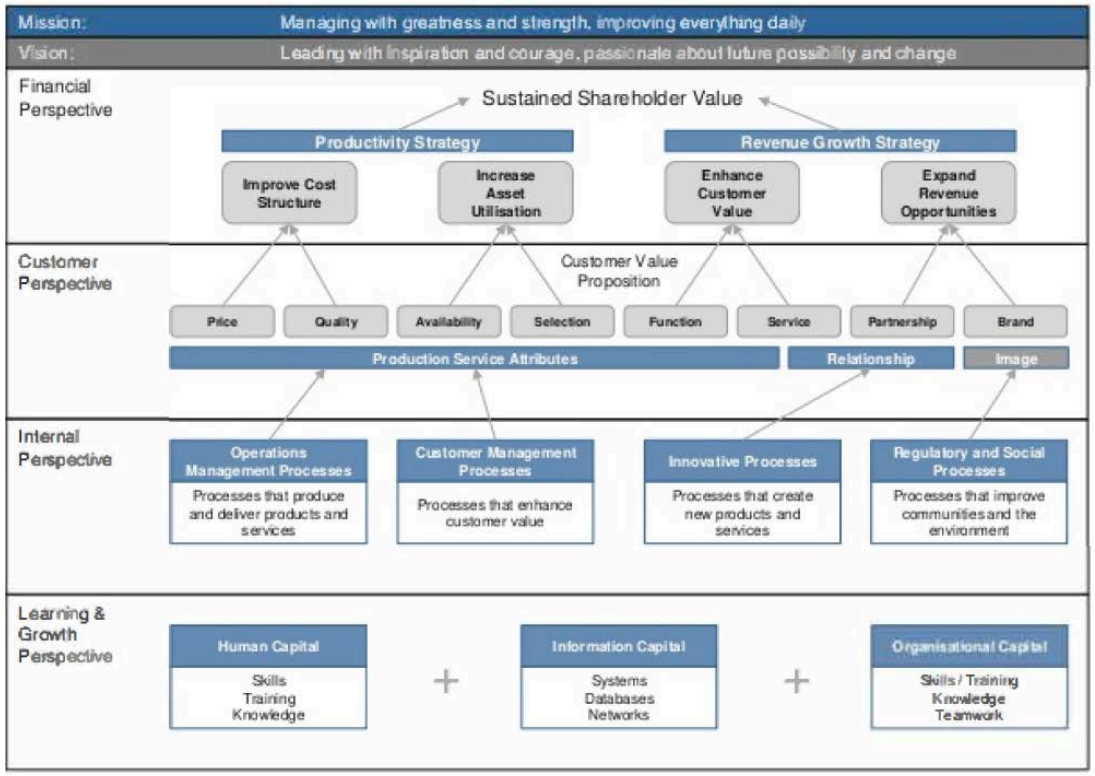
Strategy map

PURPOSE:

A strategy map is a visual summary of what a company plans to do in order to improve its business, gain more customers and improve its financial outlook.

Additionally, many companies find strategy maps valuable because they include intangible factors like culture in the strategic analysis. A strategy map provides multiple perspectives when evaluating a company and helps in the strategy's effective execution.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Strategy Map Guide
- Strategic Planning: Strategy Map EDU

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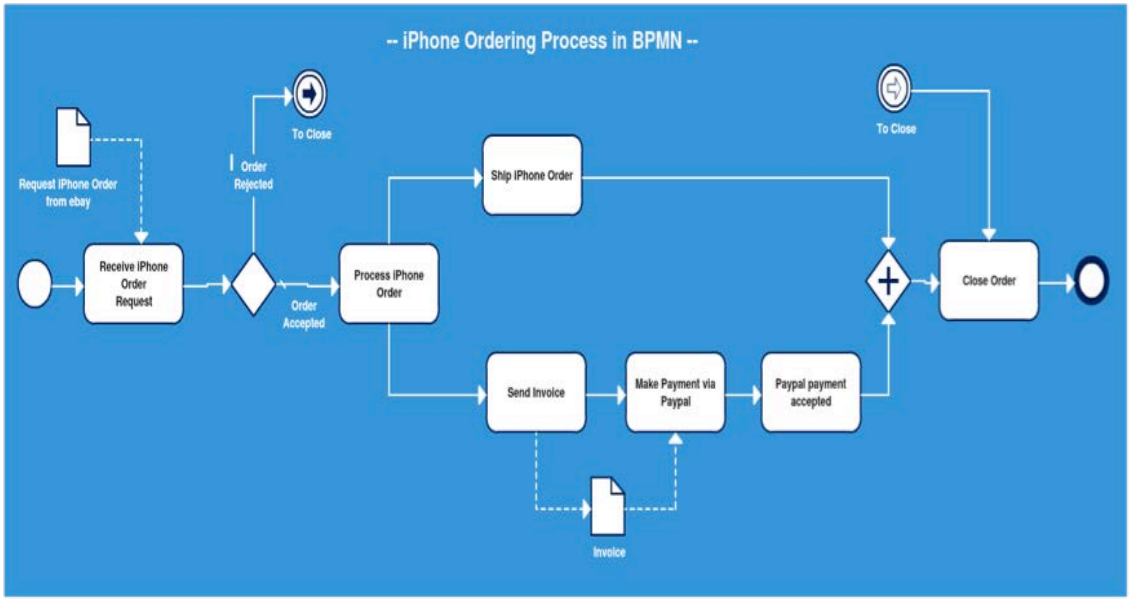
Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN)

PURPOSE:

Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN) is a standard for business process modeling that provides a graphical notation for specifying business processes in a Business Process Diagram based on a flowcharting technique very similar to activity diagrams from Unified Modeling Language (UML).

The objective of BPMN is to support business process management, for both technical users and business users, by providing a notation that is intuitive to business users, yet able to represent complex process semantics.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately BPMN Templates & Examples
- Creately Business Process Modeling Notation Guide
- BPMN Templates to Quickly Model Business Processes
- BPMN Definition & History – Wikipedia

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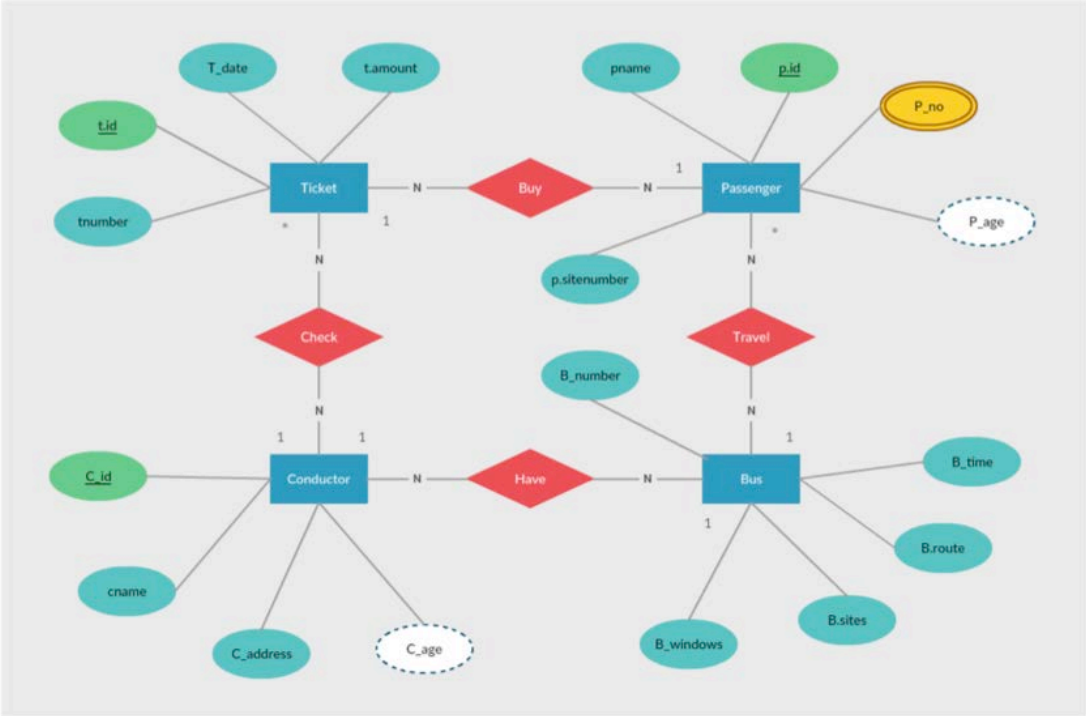
Entity-relationship diagram (ER)

PURPOSE:

An entity–relationship model (ER model) describes inter-related things of interest in a specific domain of knowledge. An ER model is composed of entity types (which classify the things of interest) and specifies relationships that can exist between instances of those entity types.

In software engineering an ER model is commonly formed to represent things that a business needs to remember in order to perform business processes. Consequently, the ER model becomes an abstract data model that defines a data or information structure that can be implemented in a database, typically a relational database.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Entity Relationship Web Page
- Creately Entity Relationship Diagram Examples & Templates
- Ultimate Guide to ER Diagrams (Entity Relationship Diagrams)
- ER Diagram Templates to Download or Modify Online

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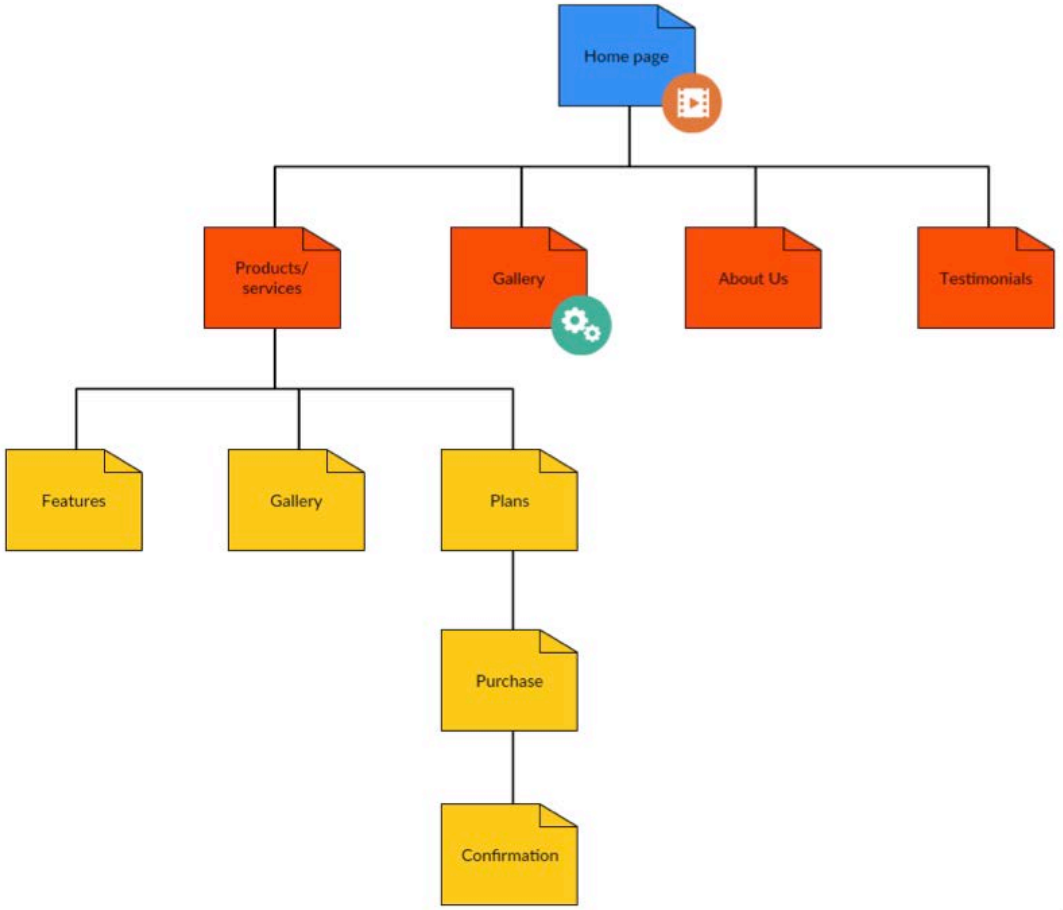
Site map

PURPOSE:

A site map is a list of pages of a web site accessible to crawlers or users. It can be either a document in any form used as a planning tool for web design, or a web page that lists the pages on a website, typically organized in hierarchical fashion.

Site maps make the relationships between pages and other content components easier to understand. They can demonstrate organization, navigation and labeling systems.



RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

- Creately Sitemap Web Page
- Creately Sitemap Examples & Templates
- Choosing the Key Ingredients for the Perfect Sitemap

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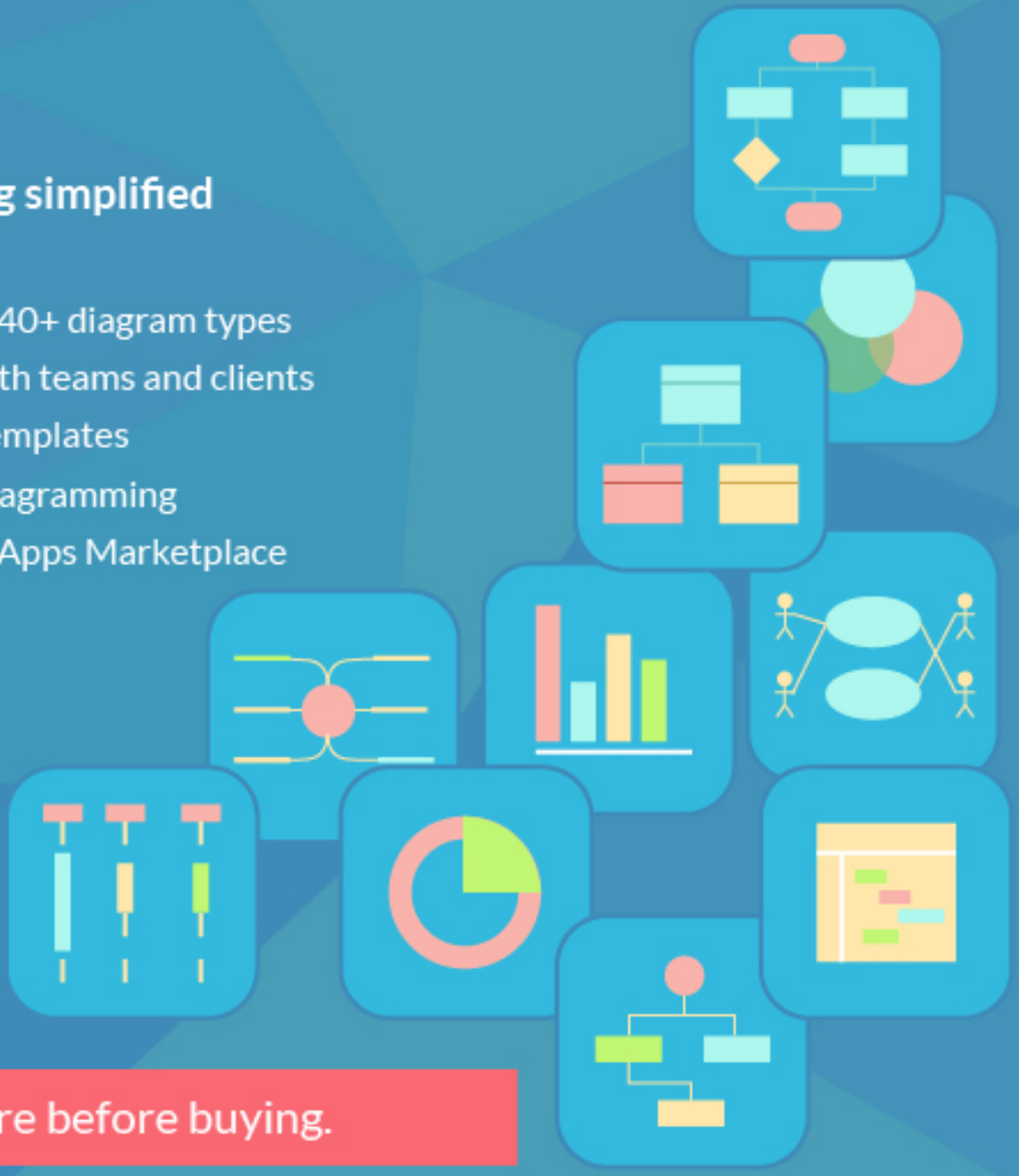

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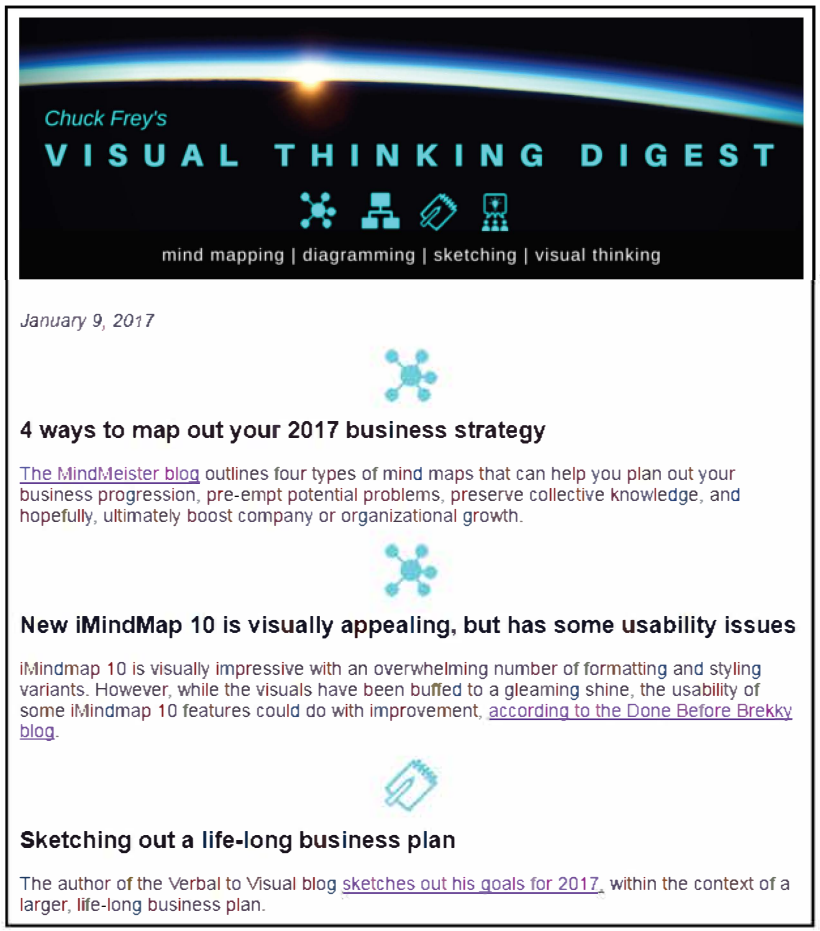

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