

# STRATEGYFINDER THE DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND HISTORY, THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

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#### Strategyfinder – the development background: theories and concepts

This document sets out the basic concepts, theories and evidence for the design of Strategyfinder. It presents the reasoning behind the software platform and argues that Strategyfinder uniquely provides a new way of Team working that can support more effective strategy making and team problem solving.

The document is in several sections – each addressing an important aspect of team working. Each section uses a mix of quotes from well know researchers along with key arguments. The section then summarises the key features of *Strategyfinder* that support the arguments presented.

There are a **series on** *Strategyfinder* **manuals** available (see Appendix 1) that describe the different uses of *Strategyfinder* and methods informed by the theories and concepts presented in this document.

The key bodies of **theory**, and the **literature associated**, that inform the Strategyfinder method are listed in appendix 2. A **brief history of the development** of the Strategyfinder method is presented in appendix 3.

#### A: Team strategy/problem solving meetings...

"The significant problems we face...cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them." Einstein

"Meetings are a great trap... However, they are indispensable when you don't want to do anything." 1

If members of a team are competent and are intent on making a good decision, then they will likely have different, but informed, views about the decision situation. It is these different views that can make a decision more robust and encourage creativity.

"Where all think alike, no one thinks very much."

**Human beings are discomforted by disagreements** and conflict. They will, therefore, incline towards conflict avoidance.

"Most organisations prefer consensus and harmony over dissent and conflict. The procedures in place often seem expressly designed to minimise the frequency of exposure to actual disagreement and, when such agreements happen, to explain them away."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> K.K Galbraith

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> P32 Kahneman et al 2021

"Groups can go in all sorts of directions, depending in part on factors that should be irrelevant. Who speaks first, who speaks last, who speaks with confidence, who is wearing black, who is seated next to whom, who smiles or frowns or gestures at the right moment - all these factors, and many more, affect outcomes." 3

**Often meetings are dominated by 1 or 2 team members,** giving others with potentially valuable input no opportunity to speak. All groups have a range of personalities with some that are naturally extravert and have lots to say and others who are less comfortable.

A meeting where conformity pressures suppress alternative views. Where there appears to be very little listening to one another? In both cases, participants don't want to rock the boat<sup>4</sup>.

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand: they listen with the intent to reply"<sup>5</sup>.

In many meetings, participants are not very good at listening because they have a keen interest in having their say and so considerable mental effort is expended to find a gap in the conversation to express views. Consequently, many important points are missed. Furthermore, sometimes the point of view being expressed is so contrary that a physiological response is triggered preventing listening and often resulting in responses that once expressed are hard to move away from.

These are process management issues and Strategyfinder has been designed to help reduce and/or alleviate them. Strategyfinder, through the combination of anonymity and simultaneous entry, reduces the chance of either of these negative group behaviours occurring and additionally allows the quieter members of a group to have their say.

Strategyfinder, through allowing the views to be captured and publicly displayed, allows participants to move from the physiological response to a more cognitive one, avoiding knee-jerk responses, and allowing for more thoughtful consideration.

The act of **co-creating agreements/outcomes** means they are imbued with both emotional as well as cognitive commitment. By being able to effectively listen and be heard participants gain a sense of ownership for the results<sup>6</sup>.

Strategyfinder provides anonymity when needed and, because everyone can speak at the same time, a co-creation process is possible. Through the mapping process all views can be more easily listened to, judged on their merit (rather than by their proponent). The team stands a much greater chance of arriving at a set of outcomes that they believe are the best. Whilst individuals may not achieve all

<sup>4</sup> . Groupthink is a well-researched (social psychology - <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink</a>) behaviour where the desire for agreement and being part of the 'group' (sometimes seen as an elite group) inhibits good rational decision-making. Abilene is where members collectively decide on a course of action that is counter to the preferences of many or all of the individuals in the group (<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abilene paradox">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abilene paradox</a>)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> P94 Kahneman et al 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Stephen Covey The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989) according to https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Stephen\_Covey

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> What is called *procedural justice* or procedural fairness (popularised by Kim WC, Mauborgne RA (1995) A Procedural Justice Model of Strategic Decision Making. Organization Science 6:44-61). This vastly assists in getting commitment to, and implementation of, the agreements.

that they want, they understand why a particular direction is being taken – they can agree to disagree and move on.

B. Causal thinking is the basis for action – causal mapping is the basis for drawing together the thinking of many people.

"...our sense of understanding the world depends on our extraordinary ability to construct narratives that explain the events we observe. The search for causes is almost always successful because causes can be drawn from an unlimited reservoir of facts and beliefs about the world." "This continuous causal interpretation of reality is how we "understand" the world." "causal thinking helps us make sense of a world that is far less predictable than we think"

Personal Psychology: "We conceive a person's processes as operating through a network of pathways... the network is flexible and frequently modified, but is structured... the channels are established as means to ends... his [her] structured network of pathways leads towards the future so that he may anticipate it" "a person places an interpretation upon what is construed. He [she] erects a structure, within a framework of which the substance takes shape or assumes meaning"<sup>8</sup>

"...in most everyday conversations, a claim to understand something is a claim to understand what causes that thing"

#### Causal maps are a network.

**Networks are a structure** which has **characteristics helpful for decision making**. There is a structure to strategy<sup>9</sup>, to solution finding. The structure depends on an understanding of the means-ends assumptions – no action is taken without a presumption about what its' consequences are expected to be.

The causal mapping technique embedded in Strategyfinder encourages reflection as each statement is explored in terms of its meaning – gained through considering both the explanations and consequences.

Causal maps allow us to manage complexity, rather than reduce it. Most complex problems comprise many elements and yet holding all of these in mind at the same time is a challenge. As such groups often decide to work on 'chunks' independent of the overall structure. and yet we know context matters and that actions taken to resolve one part can have deleterious effects on others. As noted in the quotes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Kahneman D, Sibony O, Sunstein CR (2021) Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment. William Collins, London. pp156-158 and p152

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Kelly GA (1963) A Theory of Personality: The Psychology of Personal Constructs. Norton, New York p49-50

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Eden C, Ackermann F (2001) A Mapping Framework for Strategy Making. In: Huff A, Jenkins M (eds.) Mapping Strategy, Wiley, London, pp173-195

"Every problem interacts with other problems and is therefore part of a set of interrelated problems, a system of problems.... I choose to call such a system a mess" 10

"The problems of real world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well formed structures. Indeed they tend not to present themselves as problems at all but as messy indeterminate situations" <sup>11</sup>

Causal mapping helps with managing messy problems as it allows groups to explore the full picture teasing out nuance

Strategyfinder provides assistance by allowing 'chunks' to be focused on (using specific views, similar to those present in spreadsheet software, and capable of being labelled) thus managing the cognitive load whilst also revealing that there are further consequences or explanations associated with the statements on the view through the 'hidden arrows' feature.

#### C: Negotiating agreements...

When there are different, but informed, views about the decision situation then reaching agreements depended upon a method that helps social and psychological negotiation.

"When we appear receptive to listening to and respecting others' opposing positions, they find our arguments to be more persuasive, our research shows. In addition, receptive language is contagious: It makes those with whom we disagree more receptive in return. People also like others more and are more interested in partnering with them when they seem receptive." 12

"[the] network is flexible and frequently modified"13

Strategyfinder is a visual model of system thinking by the team.

It is always in transition as the team change their mind moving towards high levels of consensus. The combination of mapping and anonymity also encourages groups to play with the different perceptions and potentially arrive at creative outcomes - creativity is stimulated.

Partly due to the challenges of cognitive overload, groups can often jump to evaluation too early — missing the key steps of Intelligence (the capturing of information) and Design (the structuring of the information) advocated by Herbert Simon. Options are assets and so opening up the conversation and exploring different points of view provide valuable stimulus. This allows for creativity and reflects Fisher and Ury's work on negotiation<sup>14</sup> — as the resultant outcome is not an individual

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ackoff, R.L. (1974) Redesigning the Future: a systems approach to societal problems. Wiley, New York. p21

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Schon, D. (1987) Educating the Reflective Practitioner, Jossey-Bass, p4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Gino, F. (2020) Disagreement Doesn't Have to Be Divisive, Harvard Business Review, November.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Kelly GA (1963) A Theory of Personality: The Psychology of Personal Constructs. Norton, New York p49

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Fisher R, Ury W (1982) Getting to Yes. Hutchinson, London.

creation but rather an emerging consequence of many intelligent brains adapting and refining the ideas. As such it is both more robust as well as generating increased ownership.

#### "If you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting"15

Strategyfinder allows for views to be captured, edited, extended and explored – a model or object in continual transition<sup>16</sup> until agreements are reached. Furthermore, Strategyfinder, through providing anonymity and direct entry, enables the co-creation process and through the mapping process allows for all views to be listened to, judged on their merit (rather than by their proponent) and the group to arrive at a set of outcomes that the group believe are the best. Whilst individuals may not achieve all that they want, they understand why a particular direction is being taken – because of this form of 'procedural justice'<sup>17</sup>, they can agree to disagree and move on.

#### D: Group Processes (see also section A)

#### "Where all think alike, no one thinks very much." 18

Groups suffer from conformity pressures – for example, 'groupthink' or the 'Abilene Paradox'. In both cases, participants don't want to rock the boat. Groupthink is a well-researched behaviour<sup>19</sup> where the desire for agreement and being part of the 'group' (sometimes seen as an elite group) inhibits good rational decision-making. The Abilene Paradox is where members collectively decide on a course of action (going to Abilene) that is counter to the preferences of many or all of the individuals in the group<sup>20</sup>.

Strategyfinder, through the combination of anonymity and simultaneous entry, reduces the chance of either of these negative group behaviours occurring and additionally allows the quieter members of a group to have their say. A powerful feature of Strategyfinder is the option to use 'blind gather' of views. Blind gather means that participants enter their views blind to the contributions of other participants, and anonymously. The views are organised — clustered - by the facilitator as they are entered by participants and then, when blind gather is complete, shown to the group. This process of blind gathering, which can be used at any time, significantly reduces the chance of 'group-think' and 'going to Abilene'. The views can then be elaborated by the group in 'open gather' mode, where all participants see all contributions as they are made. Participants are able to edit their own contributions, but not those of others.

<sup>16</sup> Black LJ, Andersen DF (2012) Using visual representations as boundary objects to resolve conflict in collaborative model-building approaches. Systems Research and Behavioral Science 29:194-208. Franco LA (2013) Rethinking Soft OR interventions: Models as boundary objects. European Journal of Operational Research 231:720-733.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> John M Capozzi 1997.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Lind EA, Tyler T (1988) The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice. Plenum, New York

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Walter Lippmann, quoted in Responsible Statecraft

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink . Key source: Janis IL (1972) Victims of Group Think. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> <u>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abilene\_paradox</u>. Source: Harvey J (1988) The Abilene Paradox: the management of agreement. Organizational Dynamics Summer:17-34.

#### E: Facilitation

Facilitation is seen to be a key part of effective group work and research has shown that in many instances, groups don't outperform their most knowledgeable members unless interaction is ameliorated through the intervention of a facilitator and with the assistance of software<sup>21</sup>. Facilitators help in the design of the meeting (who is to attend, what foci to consider, which features to use) as well as in the management of the meeting (for example, managing process issues, keeping to time, navigating the software). Facilitators therefore can help with the management of group processes (noted above).

"Facilitation is a dynamic process that involves managing relationships between people, tasks, and technology, as well as structuring tasks and contributing to the effective accomplishment of the meeting's outcomes"<sup>22</sup>

One definition of facilitation notes their role is "to see and understand the group life, and to intervene, when appropriate, to help the group stay in the present and maintain a task orientation"<sup>23</sup>. This touches on both the management of content (contributions related to the task) and process (group life). In some cases they are independent of the group, and/or the organisation, in others they are the group leader, the manager, the person initiating the meeting. Whilst many of the activities are the same, there are a few that are specific to each<sup>24</sup>. For managers facilitating their teams switching between managing process, managing content, and expressing their own views is, as always, challenging.

Strategyfinder, through the range of process manuals designed for the facilitator/leader, plus a clear graphical interface with features easy to find, has been designed with the facilitation process in mind. In addition, being able to enter ideas anonymously Strategyfinder allows facilitator-managers to be able to ensure participants feel more comfortable in contributing. The easy to set up inviting participants to join a Strategyfinder session helps an easy management of meetings.

A list of the Strategyfinder manuals is provided in Appendix 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ackermann F (2020) Group Support Systems: Past, Present, and Future. In: Kilgour DM, Eden C (eds.) Handbook of Group Decision and Negotiation, Springer Nature, Cham, Switzerland, pp627-654.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Bostrom, R. P., Anson, R., & Clawson, V. K. (1993). Group facilitation and group support systems. *Group support systems: New perspectives, 8,* 147

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Phillips L, Phillips MC (1993) Facilitated Work Groups: Theory and Practice. Journal of the Operational Research Society 44:533-549.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ackermann F, Eden C (2011) Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success. Sage, London. Chapter 11 on facilitation pp273-274.

#### Appendix 1

There are a series of Strategyfinder manuals, some of which provide guidance for different facilitated workshops aimed at different outcomes or under different constraints. (Those marked \*\* below are in development and those marked \* have useable notes/drafts sometimes on PowerPoint format)

'USING STRATEGYFINDER' MANUALS

**Strategyfinder** - Theories and Concepts

Strategyfinder - the basics [this manual]

**Strategyfinder** - Analysis Tools

A Method for Identifying Strategyfinder Participants

Strategyfinder - familiarisation session for Users

Strategyfinder - familiarisation session for participants for SuperUser with Users

Strategyfinder - ideas for presenting a strategy/actions programme

Strategyfinder – help managing strategy implementation

'STRATEGYFINDER WORKSHOP' MANUALS

Strategyfinder - Team Solutionfinder: a 2 hr workshop – ad hoc to work on a complex/messy problem

Strategyfinder - Team Strategy Finding: a 1-2 day workshop – to develop a first draft of a strategy

**Strategyfinder** - Systemic Risk Management

Strategyfinder for Estimation: using Delphi

Strategyfinder for brainstorming

\*Strategyfinder - Stakeholder Analysis and Management

\*Strategyfinder - Discover and Exploit Competitive Advantage

\*Strategyfinder - SWOT to Action (SWOTA)

\*\*Strategyfinder for Conflict Management (SCM)

#### Appendix 2: Key bodies of theory

The key bodies of theory, and the literature associated, that inform the Strategyfinder method are listing bellow:

Psychology: A Theory of Personal Constructs by George A. Kelly<sup>25</sup>.

Negotiation: Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, Revised Edition by Fisher R, Ury WL, Patton B; and originally: Getting to Yes by Fisher an Ury<sup>26</sup>.

Strategy mapping: Eden C, Ackermann F (2001) A Mapping Framework for Strategy Making. In: Huff A, Jenkins M (eds.) Mapping Strategy, Wiley, London, pp173-195

Strategy making: Eden C, Ackermann F (1998) Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management. Sage, London. Ackermann F, Eden C (2011) Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success. Sage, London.

Causal mapping: Bryson JM, Ackermann F, Eden C, Finn C (2004) Visible Thinking: Unlocking Causal Mapping for Practical Business Results. Wiley, Chichester

Decision-making/problem solving: Kahneman; Nutt PC (2002) Why Decisions Fail: avoiding the blunders and traps that lead to debacles. Berrett-Koehler Inc, San Francisco.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Kelly GA (1963) A Theory of Personality: The Psychology of Personal Constructs. Norton, New York.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Fisher R, Ury W (1982) Getting to Yes. Hutchinson, London. Fisher R, Ury WL, Patton B (2011) Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, Revised Edition. Peguin, New York

## Appendix 3: A Brief History of the Development of *Strategyfinder* Methods in the Context of Organisational Problem Solving

During time working in industry, exploiting the role of simple visually interactive models that map a conversation – for example, simple decision trees built in real-time with the decision making team – was the beginning of a focus on naturalistic and interactive modelling directly with a management team.

These experiences led to an exploration of cognitive psychology to help understand the process thinking about problem situations. The role of Personal Construct Theory (PCT) and the use of Repertory Grids and Implication Grids as an expression of this theory<sup>27</sup> and a way of understanding the nature of a problem and choosing between alternatives<sup>28</sup> seemed helpful and a practical expression of PCT.

This led to the development of 'cognitive mapping' as a better expression of Personal Construct Theory in its application to organisational settings<sup>29</sup>. The formation of the Managerial and Organisational Cognition Interest Group in the Academy of Management provided a useful context for this development.

The development of the *COPE* software in the 1980's (at the University of Bath and using an IBM Portable PC with a 386 chip) enabled the display and analysis of cognitive maps, and the subsequent development of *Decision Explorer* in the 1990's (at the University of Strathclyde, for Windows PC).

Both software programmes were able to visually represent causality and dichotomous constructs (a key element of PCT). These software packages extended the ideas behind the Implication Grid, and made it more practical in an organisational setting, by freeing up the elicitation of constructs through a formal process and instead using the currency of organisational life: verbal arguments about how a person makes sense of the nature of a problem situation.

Alongside the use of the software packages came the associated development of 'oval mapping' as a way of engaging a team in building a group view of a problem 'on the wall' as a causal map and using it to reach agreements about solutions<sup>30</sup>.

The development in the Operational Research community of 'problem structuring methods' in the 1980's facilitated the presentation of Strategic Options Development and Analysis (SODA) as a method for problem structuring and problem resolution<sup>31</sup>: Rational Analysis in a Problematic World.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Fransella F, Bannister D (1977) A Manual for Repertory Grid Technique. Academic Press, London. Adams-Webber JR (1979) Personal Construct Theory: concepts and applications. Wiley, Chichester.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Eden C, Jones S (1984) Using Repertory Grids for Problem Construction. Journal of the Operational Research Society 35:779-790.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Eden C (1988) Cognitive Mapping: a review. European Journal of Operational Research 36:1-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Bryson JM, Ackermann F, Eden C, Finn C (1995) Using the 'Oval Mapping Process' to identify strategic issues and formulate effective strategies. In: Bryson JM (eds.) Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organisations, Jossey Bass, San Francisco, pp257-275

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Eden C (1989) Strategic Options Development and Analysis - SODA. In: Rosenhead J (eds.) Rational Analysis in a Problematic World, Wiley, London, pp21-42

The advent of the SODA method became well-established, and it developed into a prescribed method taught in many University courses<sup>3233</sup> and used by Operational Research groups in business and the public sector.

Strategic planning managers (at, for example, ICL and BT in the UK) noted the potential for the use of a variation of SODA as a method for strategy development, where a senior management team could be actively involved (rather than depending only on a planning team or external consultants)<sup>34</sup>.

This active involvement with senior management teams led to a 'structure of strategy' that reflected causal mapping and its hierarchical nature (goals supported by strategies and in turn enabled by portfolios of actions) but set within a process view of strategy making<sup>35</sup>.

The significance of negotiation – both psychological and social (negotiated social order and socially negotiated order<sup>36</sup>) – became more prominent. The making strategy process developed further as it was influenced by the Harvard School of negotiation<sup>37</sup>. Although often supported by the *Decision Explorer* software it was also supported by the simple 'oval mapping' technique<sup>38</sup>. The role of the model as a 'boundary object' and 'transitional object'<sup>39</sup> to facilitate negotiation was being realised.

Alongside these core method/tool developments was the extension of methods to encompass the strategic management of stakeholders, agreeing organisational purpose, and understanding and exploiting competitive advantage<sup>40</sup>.

Decision Explorer was not ideally suited to working with management teams from a process perspective and so the *Group Explorer* software was developed (at the University of Strathclyde using Windows Server) as a support system that enabled team members to communicate directly with the strategy/causal map development via their own laptops, and to see and explore the map projected onto a screen seen by all of the team. The system, utilised *Decision Explorer* facilities such as the categorising of statements (nodes on the causal map) and the range of analysis tools. In

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Ackermann F, Eden C (2020) Strategic Options Development and Analysis. In: Reynolds M, Holwell S (eds.) Systems Approaches to Making Change: A Practical Guide, Springer-Verlag, London; following from Ackermann F, Eden C (2010) Strategic Options Development and Analysis. In: Reynolds M, Holwell S (eds.) Systems Approaches to Managing Change: A Practical Guide, Springer and the Open University Press, London, pp139-190

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Bryson JM, Ackermann F, Eden C, Finn C (2004) Visible Thinking: Unlocking Causal Mapping for Practical Business Results. Wiley, Chichester.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Eden C, Ackermann F (1992) Strategy Development and Implementation - the role of a Group Decision Support System. In: Kinney S, Bostrom RP, Watson R (eds.) Computer Augmented Teamwork: A Guided Tour, Van Nostrand and Reinhold, New York, pp325-342. Eden C, Galer G (1990) A client's perspective. Long Range Planning 23:42-43. Eden C (1993) Strategy Development and Implementation - Cognitive Mapping for Group Support. In: Hendry J, Johnson G, Newton J (eds.) Strategic Thinking: Leadership and the Management of Change, Wiley, London

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Eden C, Ackermann F (1998) Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management. Sage, London. Eden C, Ackermann F (2001) A Mapping Framework for Strategy Making. In: Huff A, Jenkins M (eds.) Mapping Strategy, Wiley, London, pp173-195.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> See Chapter 3 of Eden C, Ackermann F (1998) Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management. Sage, London. And Eden C, Bennett PG, Clark P, Stringer J (1993) Problem Formulation and Negotiation in Multi-Organisational Contexts. Journal of the Operational Research Society 44:625-628.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Fisher R, Ury W (1982) Getting to Yes. Hutchinson, London

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Bryson JM, Ackermann F, Eden C (2014) Visual Strategy. Wiley, San Francisco.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Eden C (2021) Behavioural Considerations in Group Support. In: Kilgour DM, Eden C (eds.) Handbook of Group Decision and Negotiation, Springer Nature, Switzerland, pp777-792

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Ackermann F, Eden C (2011) Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success. Sage, London. Colin Eden and Fran Ackermann Jan 2023. V1.1 E: <u>Colin@strategyfinder.com</u>, <u>fran@strategyfinder.com</u>

addition, the problem structuring method began to be used for systemic risk management<sup>41</sup> and unravelling the failure of major projects<sup>42</sup>.

Decision Explorer and Group Explorer became out-dated and, in particular, did not allow for team work where team members were located in different places and required Windows Server (specialist and expensive) rather than being browser based. Some of the strategic problem solving and strategy making work had involved senior management teams where each member was located in a different country – initial maps had to be built on a one-to-one basis and then merged.

Thus, *Strategyfinder* has been developed to reflect the long-term theoretical and practical development of the strategy making and strategic problem-solving method<sup>43</sup>.

Strategyfinder has taken 3 years to develop but has been used very successfully for all the above situations, with a recent focus on addressing 'grand challenges'<sup>44</sup>. Strategyfinder, crucially, is browser based, provides very easy entry and location of statements (nodes) and causal links and their editing, allows for the strategy maps to be in continual transition as the thinking of the team shifts, and has a very wide range of analysis tools: all of the key features of *Group Explorer* plus many more.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ackermann F, Eden C, Williams T, Howick S (2007) Systemic Risk Assessment: a case study. Journal of the Operational Research Society 58:39-51. Eden C, Gonzalez JJ (2022) Systemic Risk and Disaster Risk Reduction. In: Radianti J, Gjøsæter T, Murayama Y (eds.) Information Tecnology in Disaster Risk Reduction ITDRR, Springer Nature, Cham, Switzerland

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Williams TM, Ackermann F, Eden C (1997) Project Risk: systemicity, cause mapping and a scenario approach. In: Kahkonen K, Artto KA (eds.) Managing Risks in Projects, E&FN Spon, London, pp343-352

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Eden C, Ackermann F (2018) Theory into practice, practice to theory: Action Research in method development. European Journal of Operational Research 271:1145-1155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Ackermann, F., Pyrko, I. and Hill, G. (2023) Mobilizing Landscapes of Practice to Address Grand Challenges, Human Relations, doi: 10.1177/00187267221137884