



PREP TIME

2 hrs+



RUNNING TIME

1 hr



SUITABLE GROUP SIZE

6-10



MATERIALS NEEDED

Large conversation sheet (A1+)



BEST ENVIRONMENT

Around a table



Landscape for action



When you need to get a group of people involved in working together to get a plan in play.

You want to speed things up, get everyone to a common starting position to work on what's involved in the context of the situation and generate a practical plan for action that people buy into.

'Landscape for Action' is an approach that helps you do this. It has 2 parts:

- Creating the picture (your 'Landscape')
- A conversation - using the 'Landscape' as the focal point for group action planning.





Picture a double page spread in a Sunday newspaper - It explains how a team of people have just walked across Antarctica, not just in the body text but also in a large info graphical diagram.

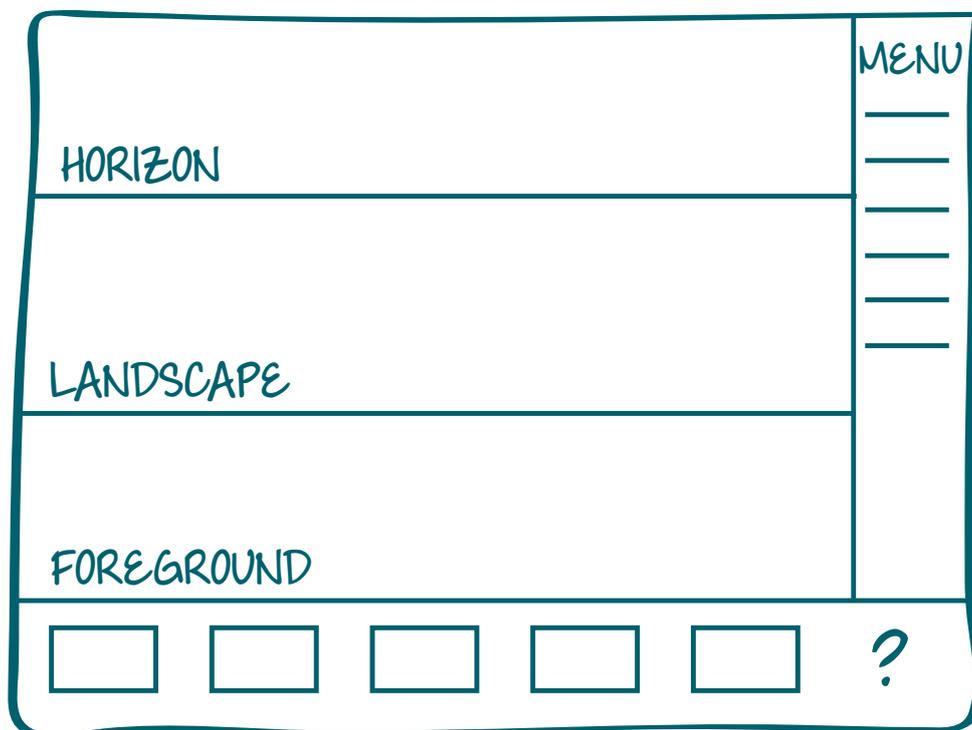
The diagram shows the map of Antarctica, the route taken by the team, the vital statistics of the challenge (distance, means of travel, timetable etc.) their base camp, how they resourced their journey, the obstacles along the way, the weather on route, where they were able to kite ski and the speeds achieved. There's info on the teams fitness levels and how they trained prior to the journey, there's a very short biography on each of the team members etc. - all organized across and around the master picture...

The effect is to very quickly give you the information you need, the key components and tell you the story of the journey, the challenge and the outcome - all in a matter of seconds - it's powerful stuff. Then if you want more detail, you can read the body text.

Now imagine transferring these techniques **to your business situation**. It could be to get things moving on implementing your whole business strategy, making a major change to the business or something more specific within business development.



LANDSCAPE FOR ACTION



Here's an example of **developing / selling to a major customer or client** to demonstrate how to apply the approach. Try this out:

1.

Look out to the horizon – First, start with pulling together some facts and information that describe the market in which your customer/client does business (e.g. growth/shrinkage rate, challenges, forces for change, competition and new entrants, impact of disruptive technology, scale of the opportunities, effect of global shifts etc.)

2.

Come closer and think about the landscape – and look at your customer/client's business – stand in their shoes: what are they trying to achieve (what's the prize)? What resources do they have? Look at performance trends & progress made, targets, challenges, their competitors and pressures from their own customers. Try a simple SWOT test and anticipate the problems they need to solve in order to grow.

3.

Now think about the foreground – look to your own business. Where does it stand? How is it different? How could it further differentiate itself? What is the competitive situation? Draw in some solid facts on the choices that the customer has. What are the value choices and how does your business come into play vs. the competition? E.g. skills and experience, product features & benefits, service innovations, efficiency and price/value etc.

4.

Finally put together a list of the 'people and resources' that are involved along with possible alternatives or additional resources the business could call on to win more business. Pull all your information together. You can do this on your own or you can involve some group members, which can be fun and enlightening in itself.

Now you are ready to plot it out on a visual map.

5.

Draw your Landscape for Action

You don't need to be an artist or good at drawing to do this – rough and sketchy work too! Start drawing and be prepared to throw some 'first attempts' in the bin as you get to something that is approximately right (again you can involve a few people in doing this – it's revealing and fun choosing which bits of information to plot – keep the information that you don't use on your visual, you might need to use it to inform on going conversations)

Plot your base map (scenario outline) then group and set out the information in layers as above – **Horizon** at the top of the paper, then below that the landscape and so on... (see our rough sketches). You will need to use a large piece of paper, at least A1 (flipchart size).

Use bullets, small clusters and little sketches – you won't fit it all on and you need a few goes at simplifying things.

Just remember it's a simple picture that people can read in seconds, not a brainstorm sheet or a complex mind map that it will take people minutes to figure out.

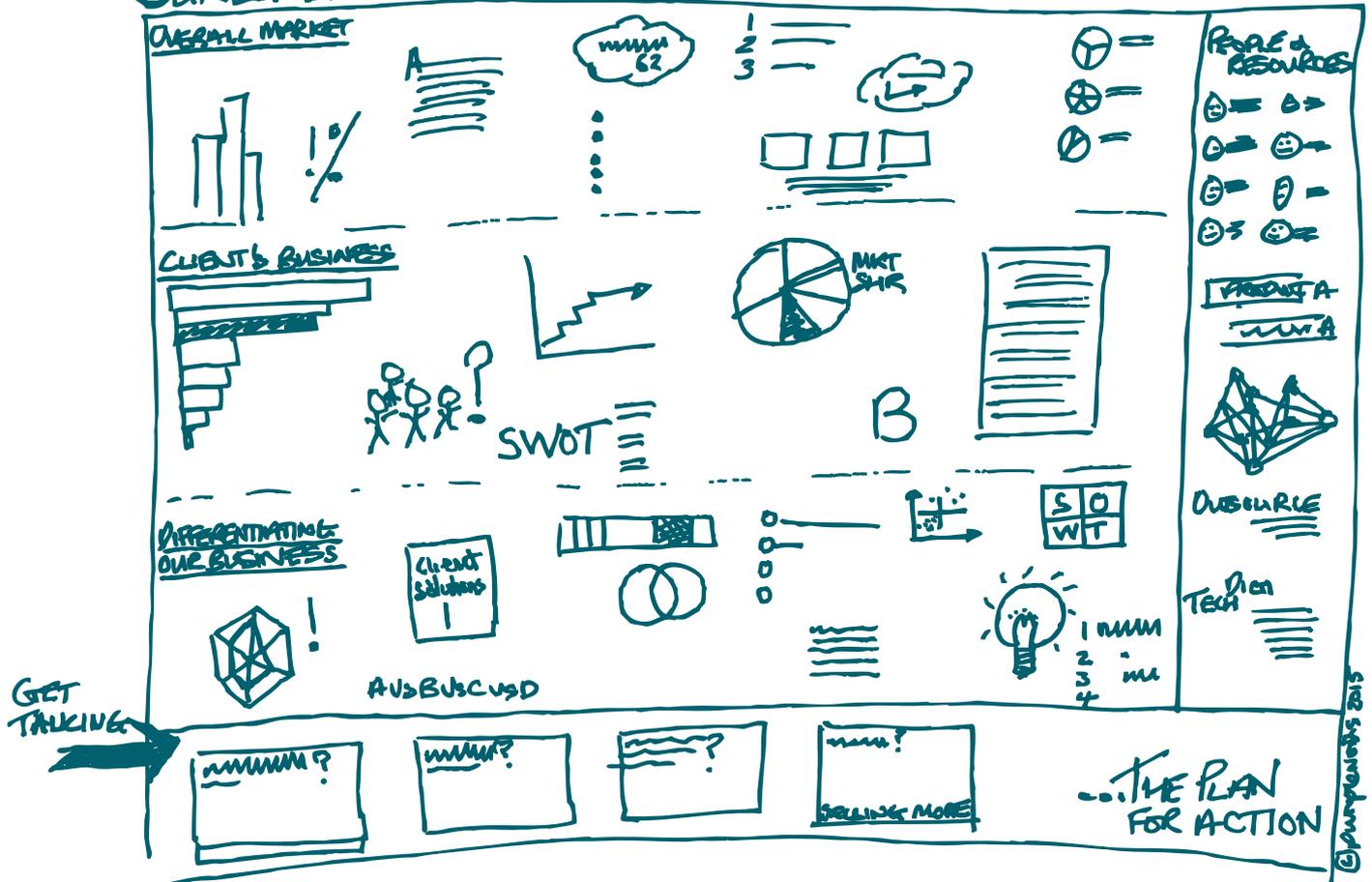
Be sure to allow **space on the right-hand side** of your 'visual' to set out the people and resources information – 'menu style' is great for this sort of information.

And finally, along the very bottom of the paper, draw a few simple boxes. In each one write a question that will help frame the plan and allow space for people to write notes for action. E.g. Questions along these lines (you'll need to shape them to fit with your language, culture and the level of sophistication of your group). What are the top 3 opportunities? What weaknesses and threats need to be addressed? What preparation work needs to be done? What are the next 3 steps with the customer/client? Which relationships do we need to grow? What do we put into action today? And of course – by whom and when?

This is your 'Landscape for Action'.



OUR LANDSCAPE...



Lead your group action-planning meeting.

Now you are ready to serve things up. Get the right group of people together and start the conversation on putting an action plan together.

Get your group together around a table and, by way of a short introduction, remind people why you are holding the meeting – "...to develop the action plan for growing your business with a specific customer/client."

Then to get things going, place the 'landscape' in the middle of the table and ask people to review what they see. Be sure to give people time to study the visual before you take things further. It will take just a few seconds for people to get the big picture – then a little longer for them to look more closely at what's in front of them and process what this means for them.

Start the conversation by getting each person to comment on what they see. The differences in what the individuals see will further inform the whole group's understanding and will build a more valuable picture of the opportunity in front of them.



Allow the conversation to run and make sure that everyone has their say. (Refer to 'Simple Conversations' in the ingredients section of Strategy Kitchen, if you need some more ideas on leading the conversation.)

This open conversation is an important part of shaping the action plan, so, after about 20 minutes (more if the group is over 6 people) draw your group's attention to the questions you set out along the bottom of your 'Landscape'.

Focus people on addressing each of the questions. They will do so influenced by their conversation on the 'Landscape' – the big picture in front of them and the insight to how each person has interpreted it.

This makes for a richer, more valuable way of getting the group to discuss and agree a plan.

When you need more

In some situations when the stakes are high and the whole business is affected, it becomes worthwhile to take a more sophisticated approach to creating the 'Landscape for Action'.

This involves deeper research and analysis of the information to use, more studied development of the visual & questions to frame action and the use of professional infographics.

Purpleworks has extensive experience in creating these more specialised 'Landscapes' for clients – you can find out more about how we can help by contacting us at engage@purpleworks.com.

