Best Practices in Graphical EA Modelling

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Introductions

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(Producer of iServer EA modeling software)

How we got here…

"iServer offers total flexibility in diagramming practices and standards"

"That's nice. What diagram standards should we adopt then?"

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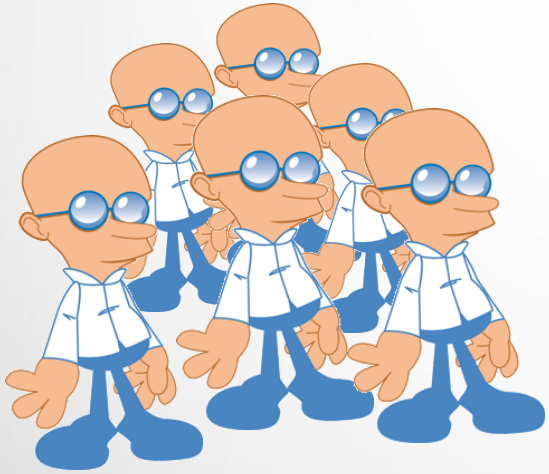
Agenda

1. Introductions
2. General Principles
3. Diagramming Patterns
4. Diagramming Anti-patterns
5. Conclusions

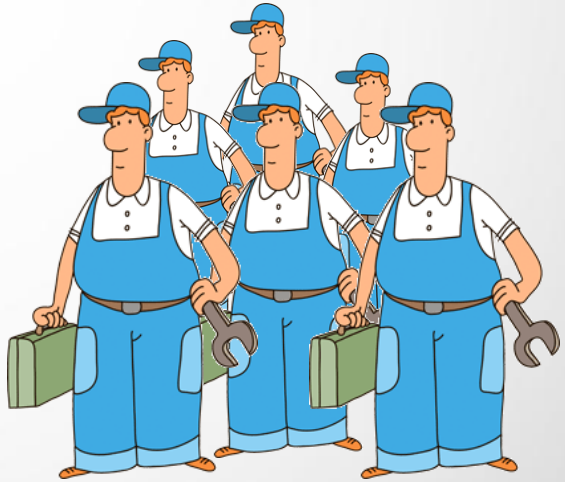
General Principles

Know your audience

WHO will be looking at the diagrams?
WHY will they be looking at it?
WHAT does the diagram show?
WHERE will they be looking at it?
HOW will they understand it?
WHEN – under what circumstances will it be used?



V.



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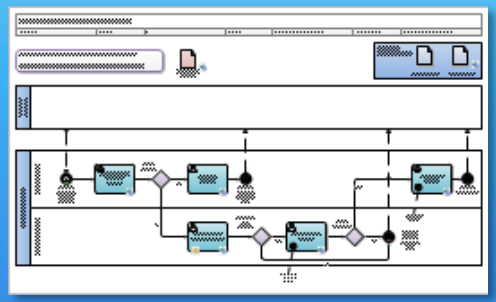
One diagram = One Message

Diagram that try to say too much become confusing

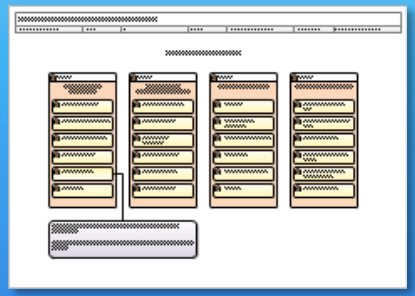
Every diagram should have an elevator statement

What is the message of this diagram?

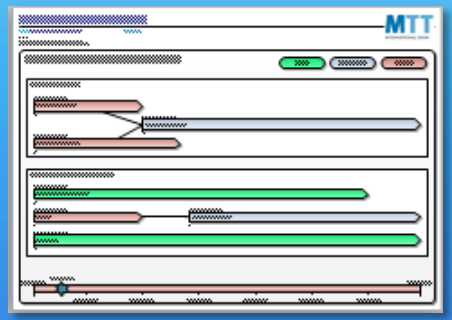
"This is how we validate suppliers"



"This is the functional decomposition for the HR dept"

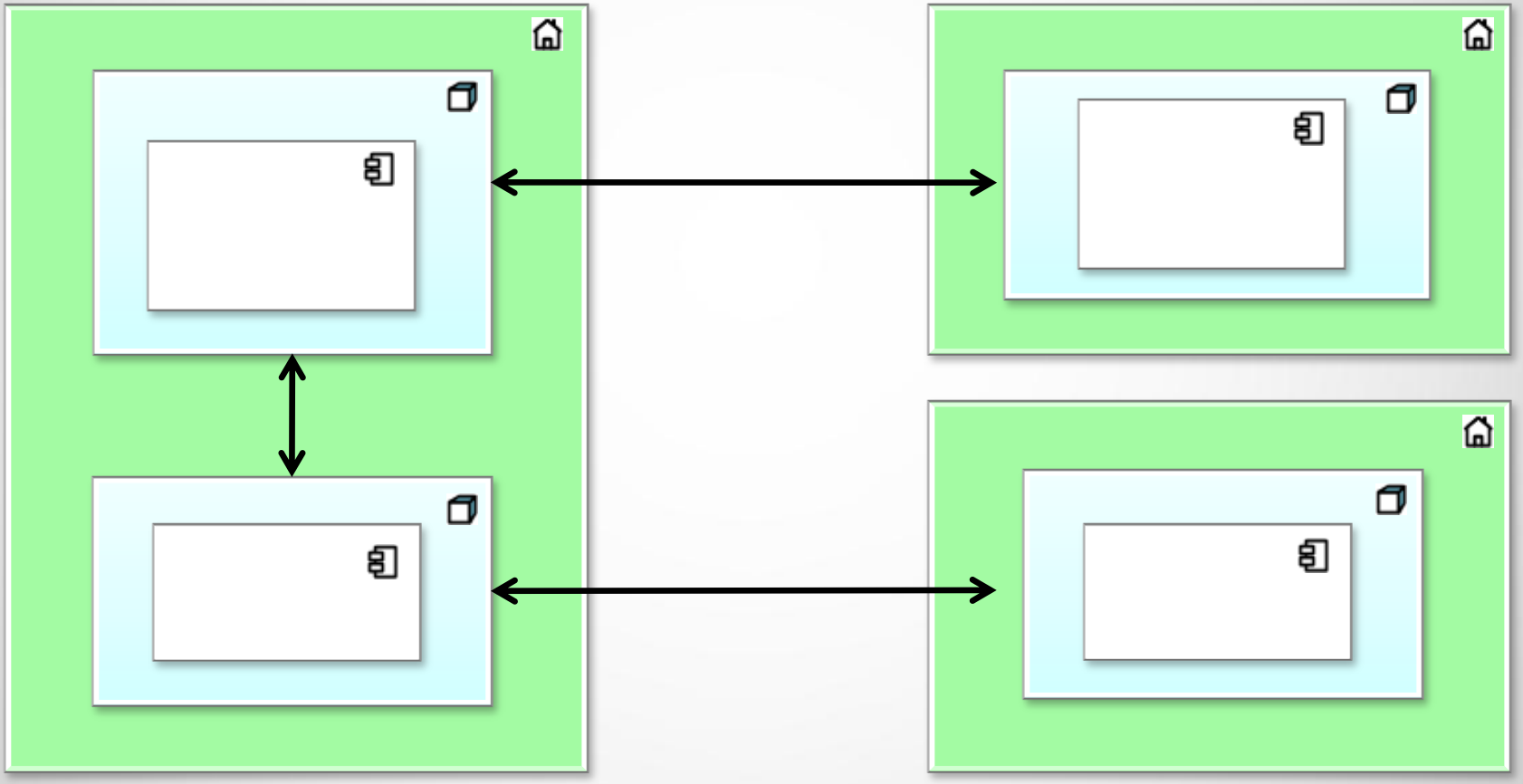


"These are the timelines for our ERP replacement program"



Use different symbols for different things

Using, e.g. a rectangle, for everything makes it unclear what is what

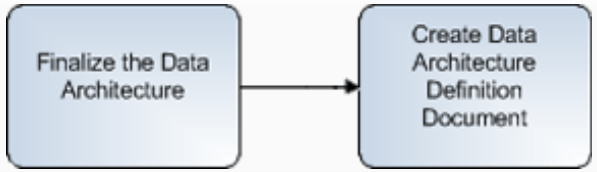


Use Consistent naming Standards

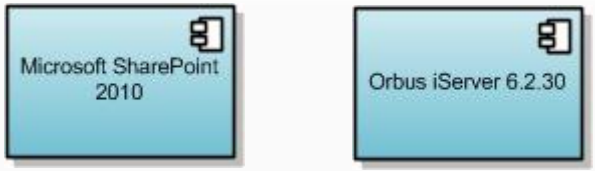
Consistency helps people correctly identify things

Leverage off any existing standards that exist

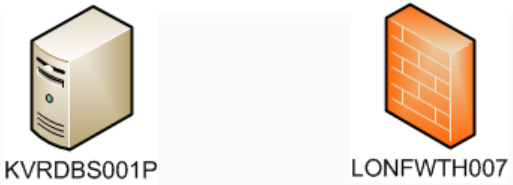
Process tasks = VERB+NOUN



Physical Applications = Vendor ProductName Version



Infrastructure components = Hostname



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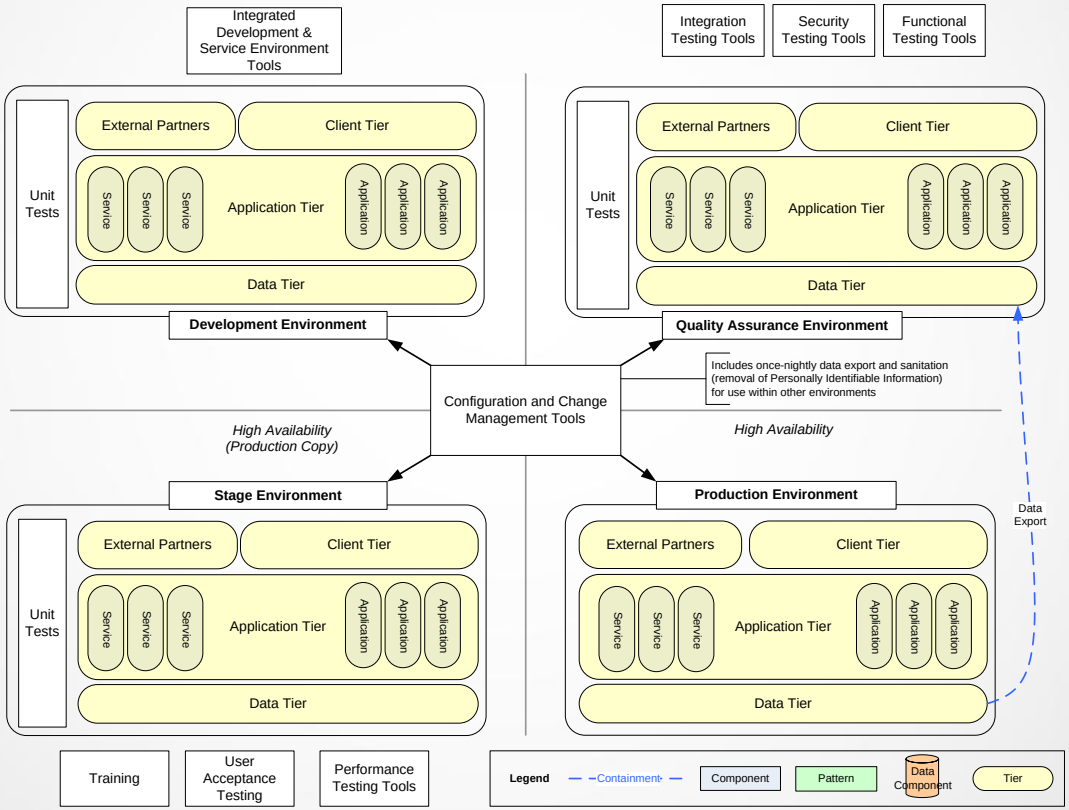
Clear Organisation

Use whitespace to separate items; arrange things on a grid



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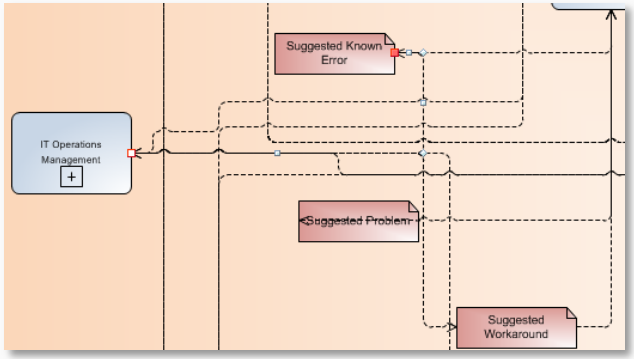
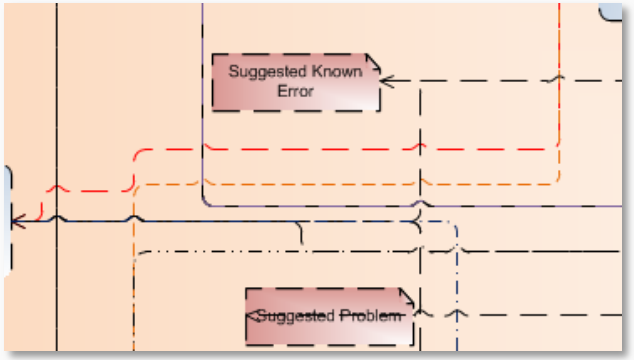
Route Connectors Carefully and Sparingly

Try hard to route connectors appropriately.

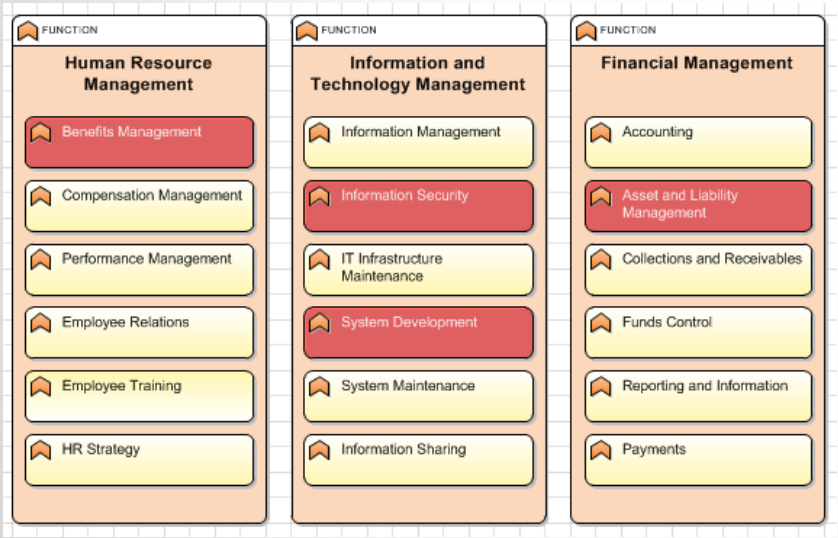


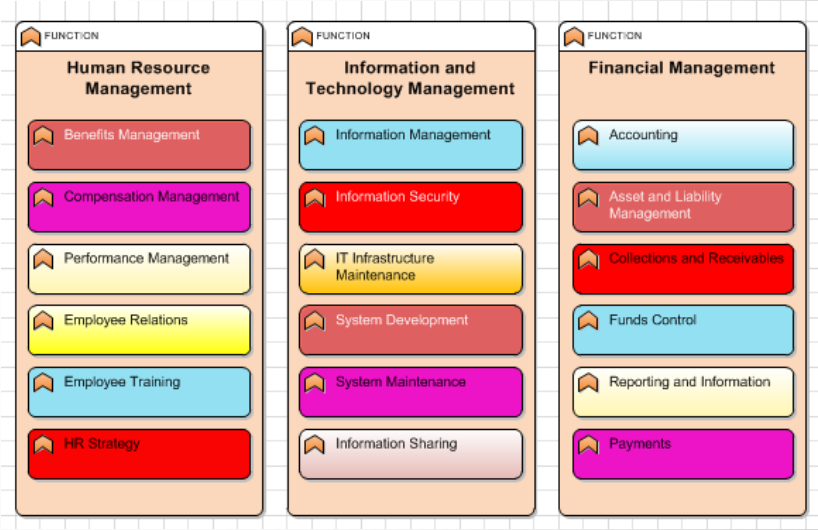
Consider colouring and/or using patterns to keep lines clear



Use colour carefully

Don’t use too many colours – and be aware of colour-blind issues





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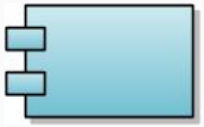
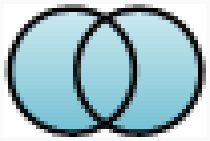
Use (and follow) standards





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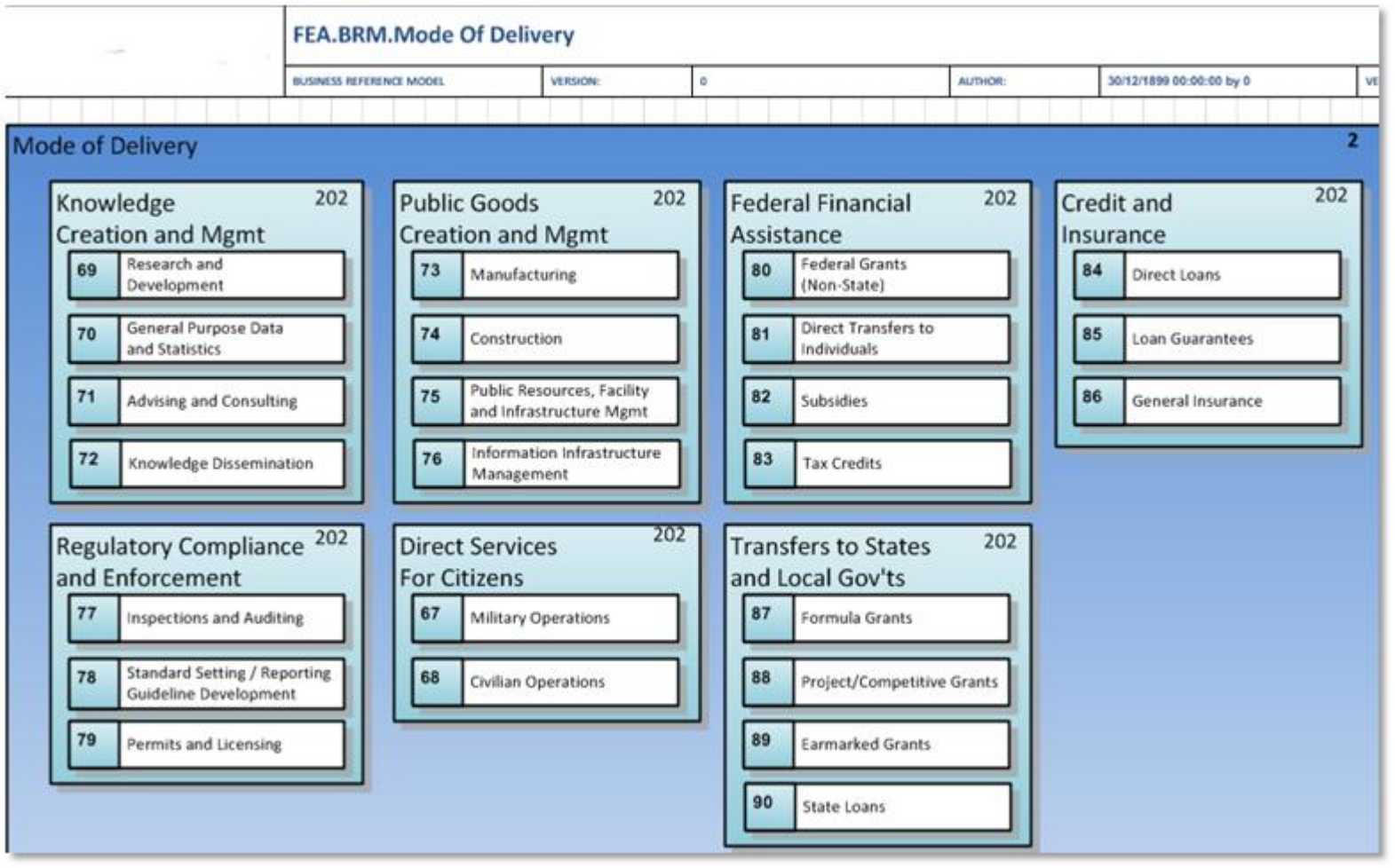
Diagramming Patterns

The Catalogue

Lists a set of items, grouped if appropriate



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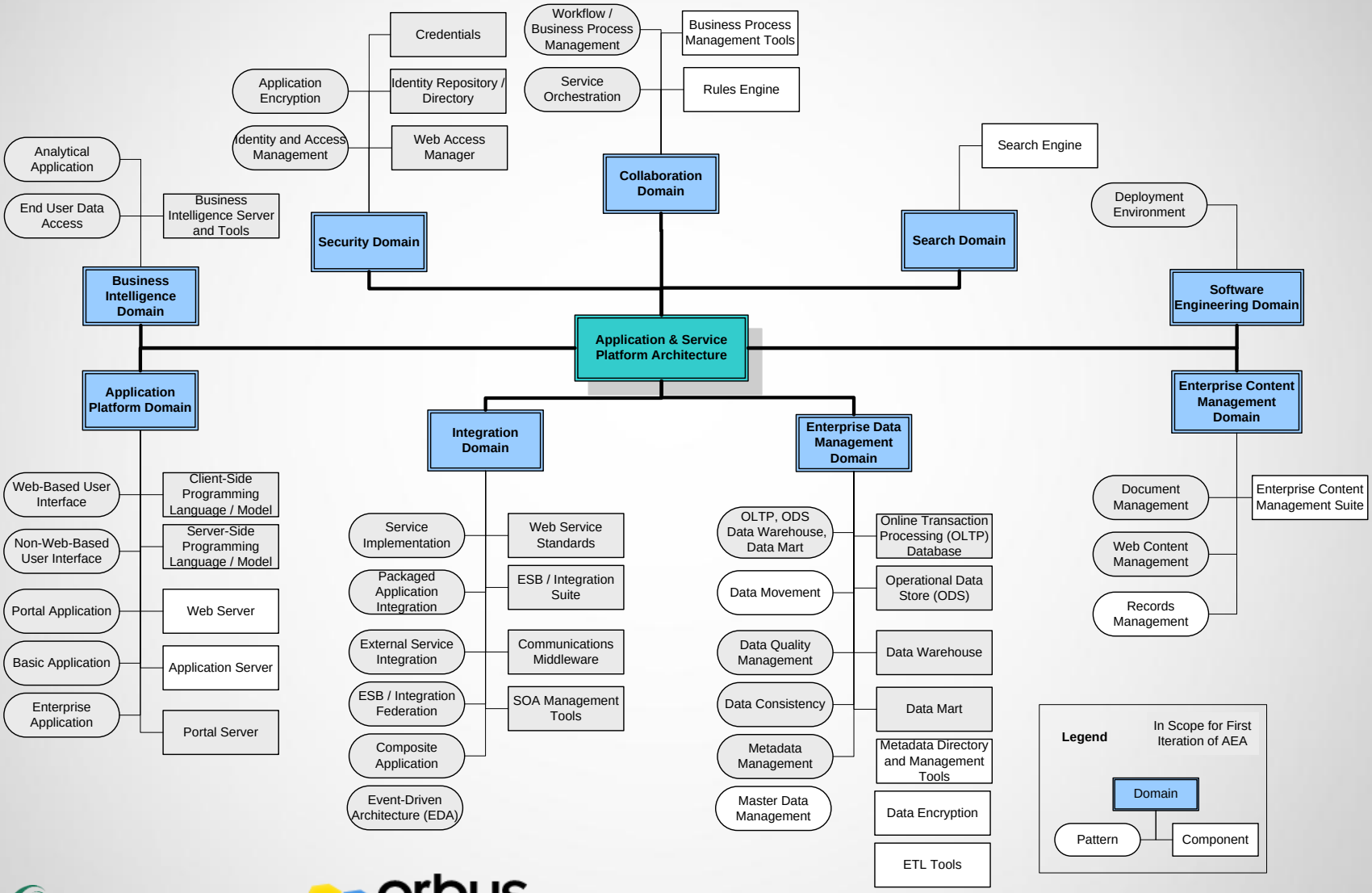
The Hierarchy (type 1)

Shows the decomposition



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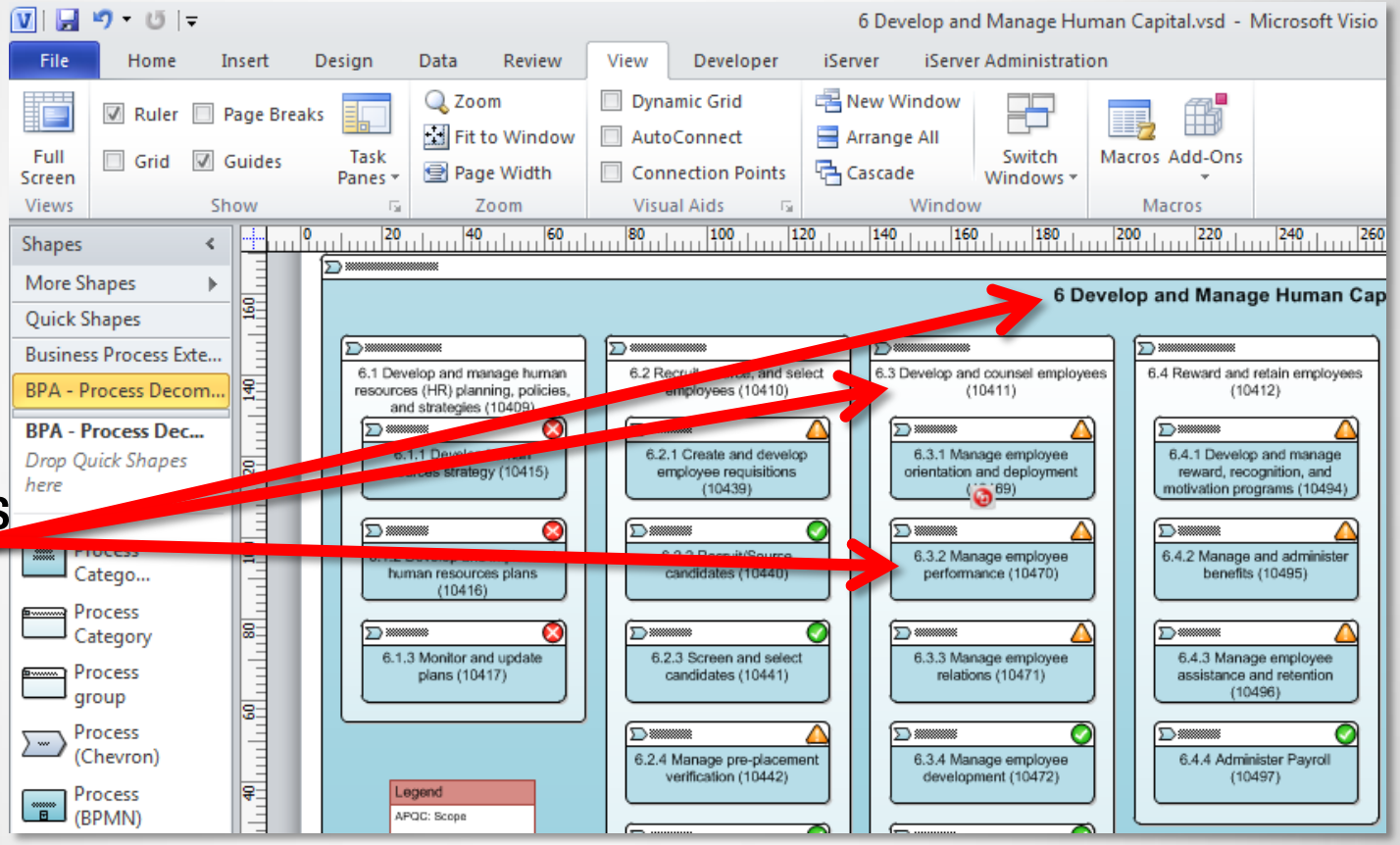
The Hierarchy (type 2)

Shows the decomposition

Different levels of process



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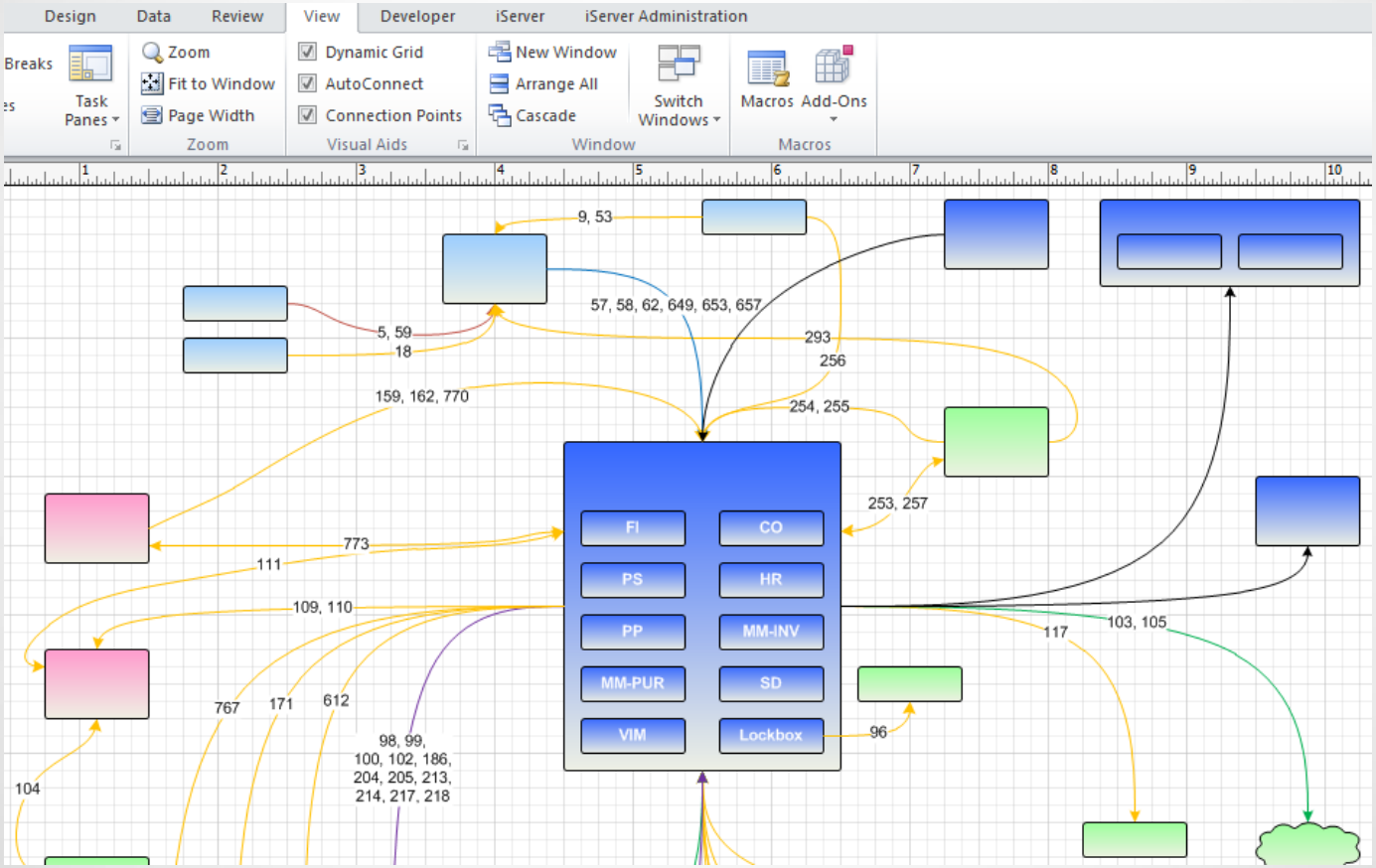
The Context Diagram

Shows a central item and what connects to it

BUT don't mix levels – use multiple context diagrams



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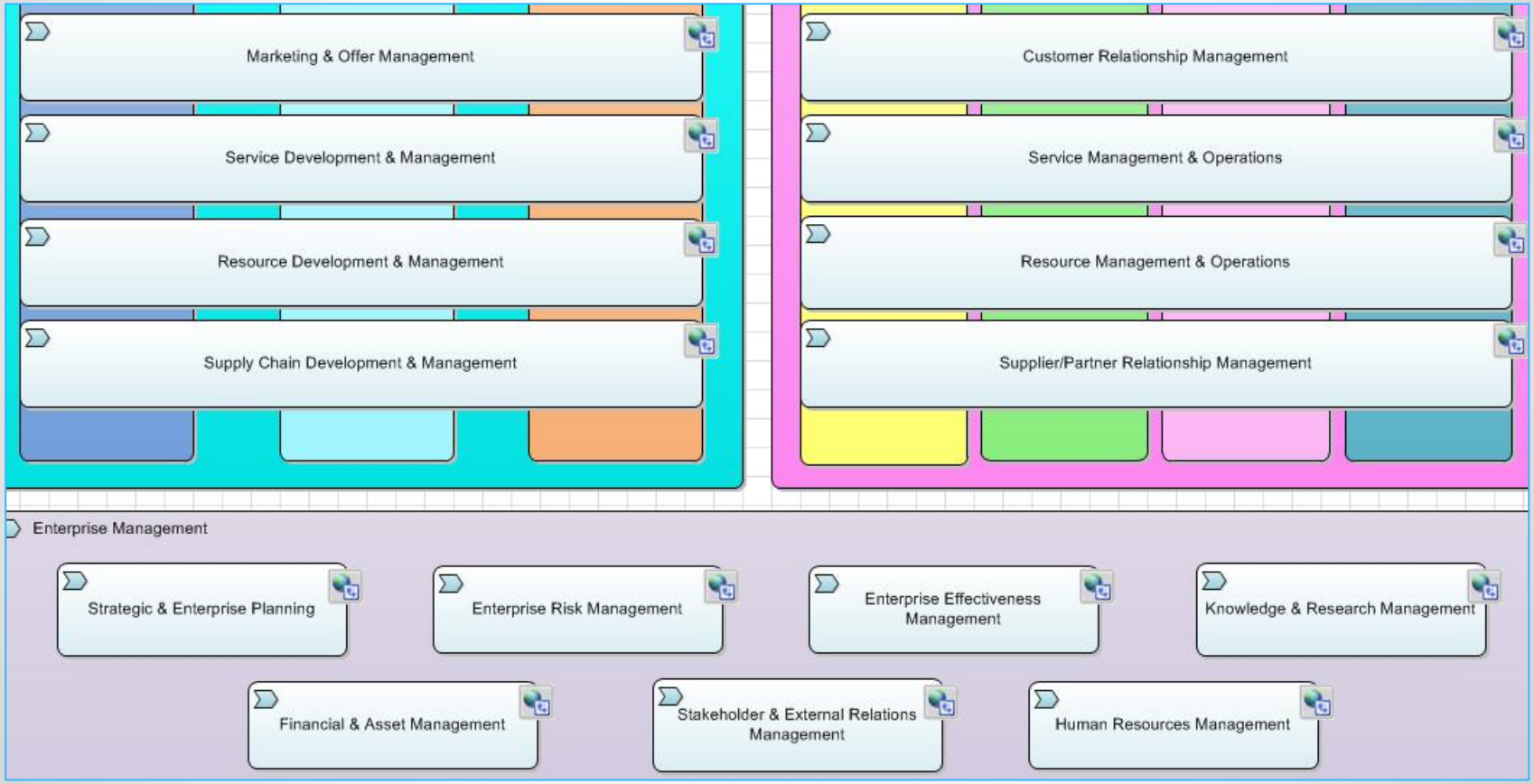
The Site Map

Acts as a jumping-off points

Used in conjunction with connectors to provide links



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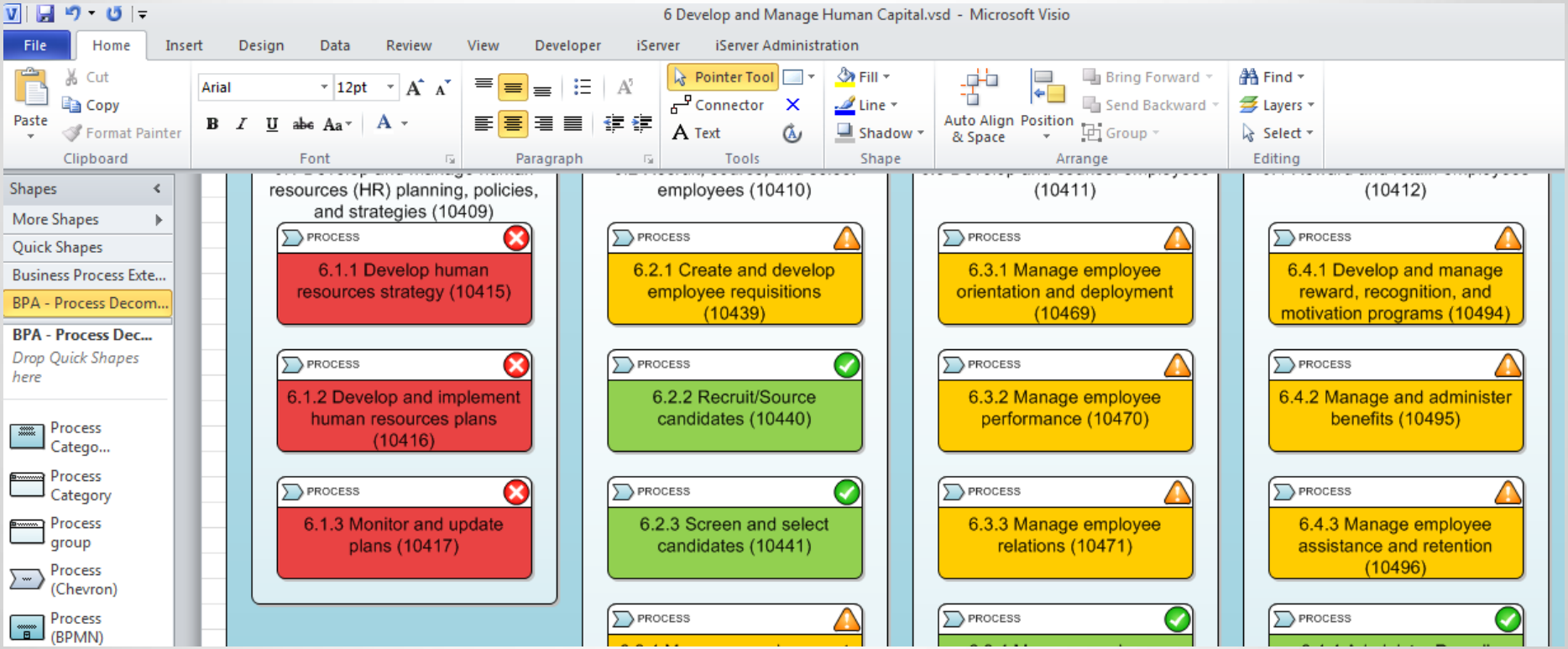
The Heatmap

Purpose: Give an at-a-glance feel for patterns of data

Be wary of colorblind considerations – preferably use icons as well



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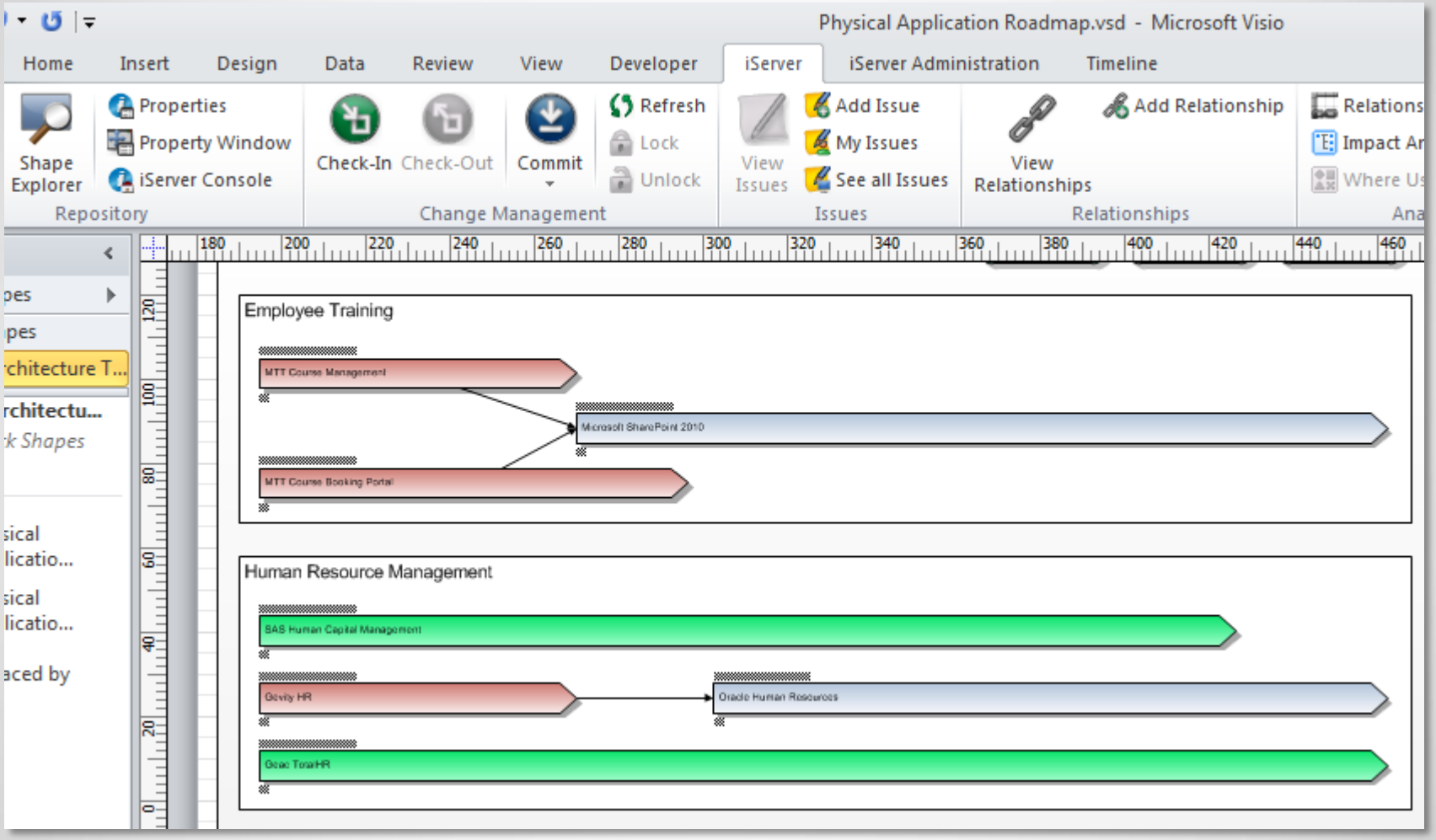
The Timeline

Shows relative durations



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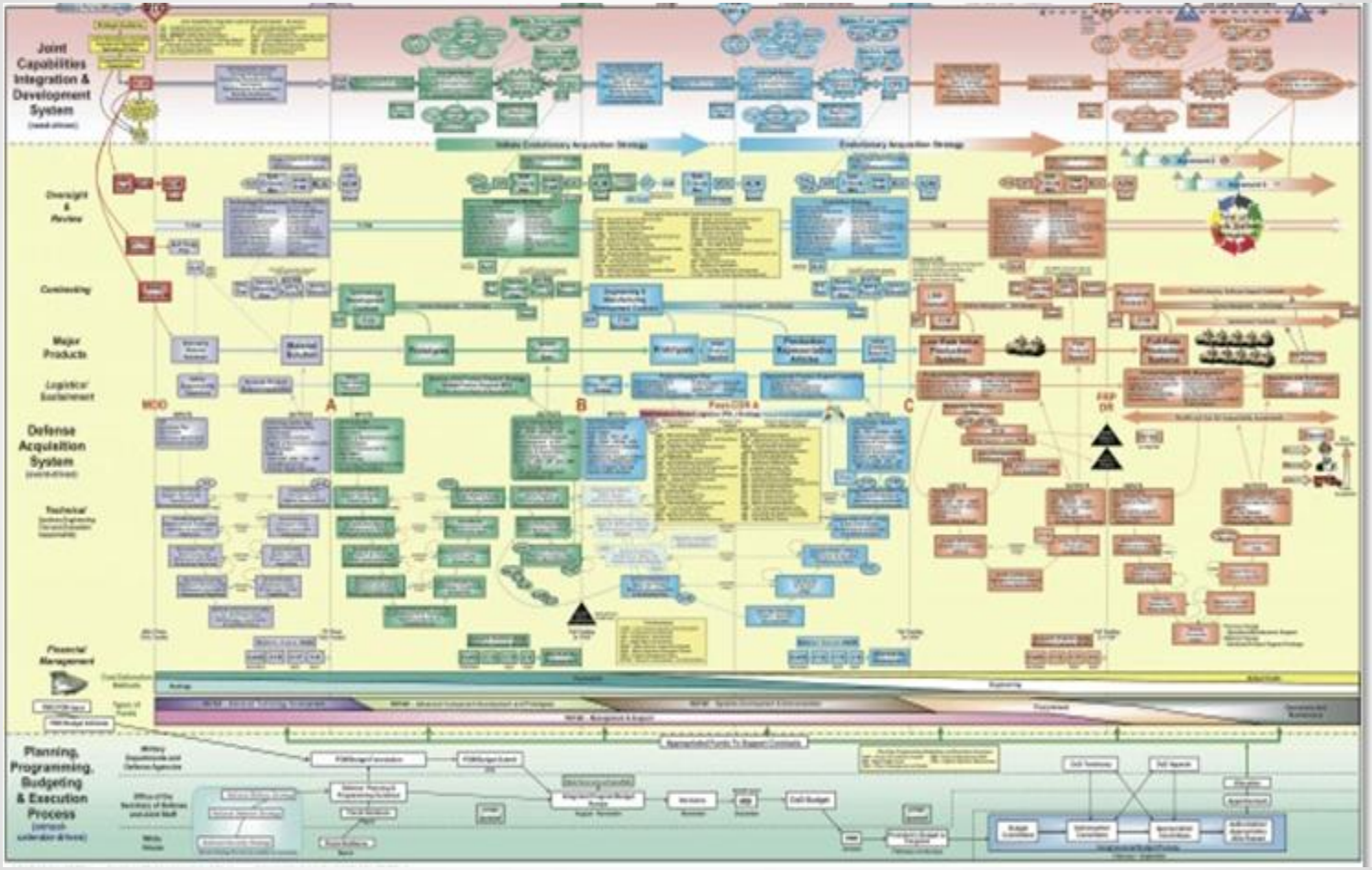
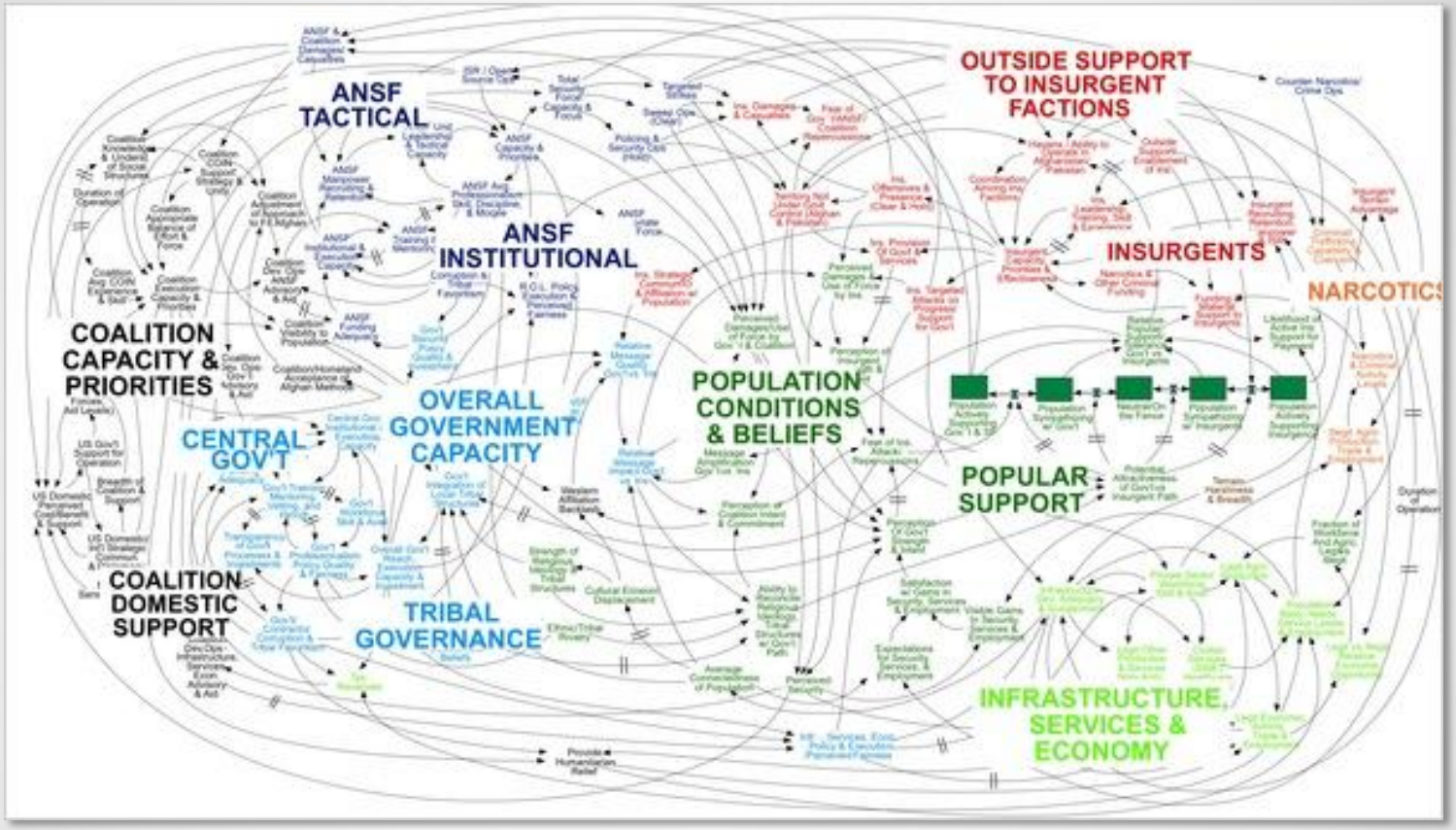
Diagramming Anti-Patterns

The 'So What'

Attempts to show every aspect of a situation :
leads to a cluttered diagram – where do you get started?



The Megadiagram



"When we understand that slide, we will have won the war"

- General Stanley A. McChrystal

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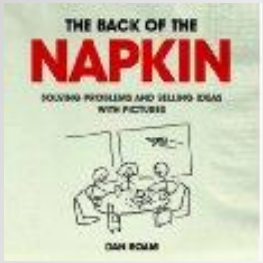
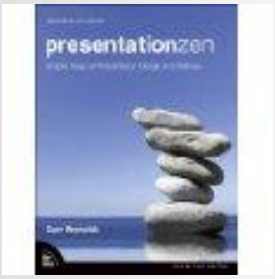
Recommended Reading



"The Back of the Napkin"
- Dan Roam



"Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery"
- Garr Reynolds

Questions and Answers

Download this Presentation and White Paper from:

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