

Insights for a CIO/CTO: A Metamodel for Strategy Description; How Can Strategies Be Best Described?

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Part of the “Insights for a CIO/CTO” Series

1 Abstract

This paper proposes a metamodel for strategy description. The original design of this metamodel is part of the author’s novel strategy development method but on its own, it can truly describe what a strong strategy should contain and what semantic relationships exist between the elements forming a strategy. The proposed metamodel could be also used as a mechanism of communicating strategies and driving transformational programs of change and initiates. With CIO/CTO offices responsible to develop IT/ICT/Digital strategies for their respective enterprises, this paper can be a good source to drive thought and rationale during the strategy development process.

Keywords: Strategy Development, Metamodel, Strategy Elements, Strategy Description

2 Introduction

Let us begin with the definition of strategy. According to Chandler, a strategy is “the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” [1], which is a plan-oriented definition for strategy. According to Mintzberg, a strategy is “a pattern in a stream of decisions” [2] which is a pattern-based definition for the term. According to McKeown, a strategy is a future-centred attempt to reach “desirable ends with available means” [3], which is mostly a resource-centric definition for the term.

The author proposes a new definition for strategy as “an abstraction of a dynamic master plan to realize a goal through interconnected decisions over time”, which is the foundation of his proposed strategy development method (presented in a separate paper) and reflects the dynamic and agile nature of strategy in today’s business, reflecting and re-emphasizing what in the literature of strategy development and strategic management has been discussed as “strategy dynamics”. In today’s rapidly changing environment, it has become evident that in order to have a chance to success, organizations must make their strategies more “agile” [4].

Accordingly, the proposed metamodel can effectively describe the elements and constituents of a strategy and their relationships and can drive agile strategy development processes

3 A Metamodel for Strategy Description

The author’s proposed metamodel for strategy description has been depicted in Figure 1 as a class diagram in Unified Modelling Language (UML).

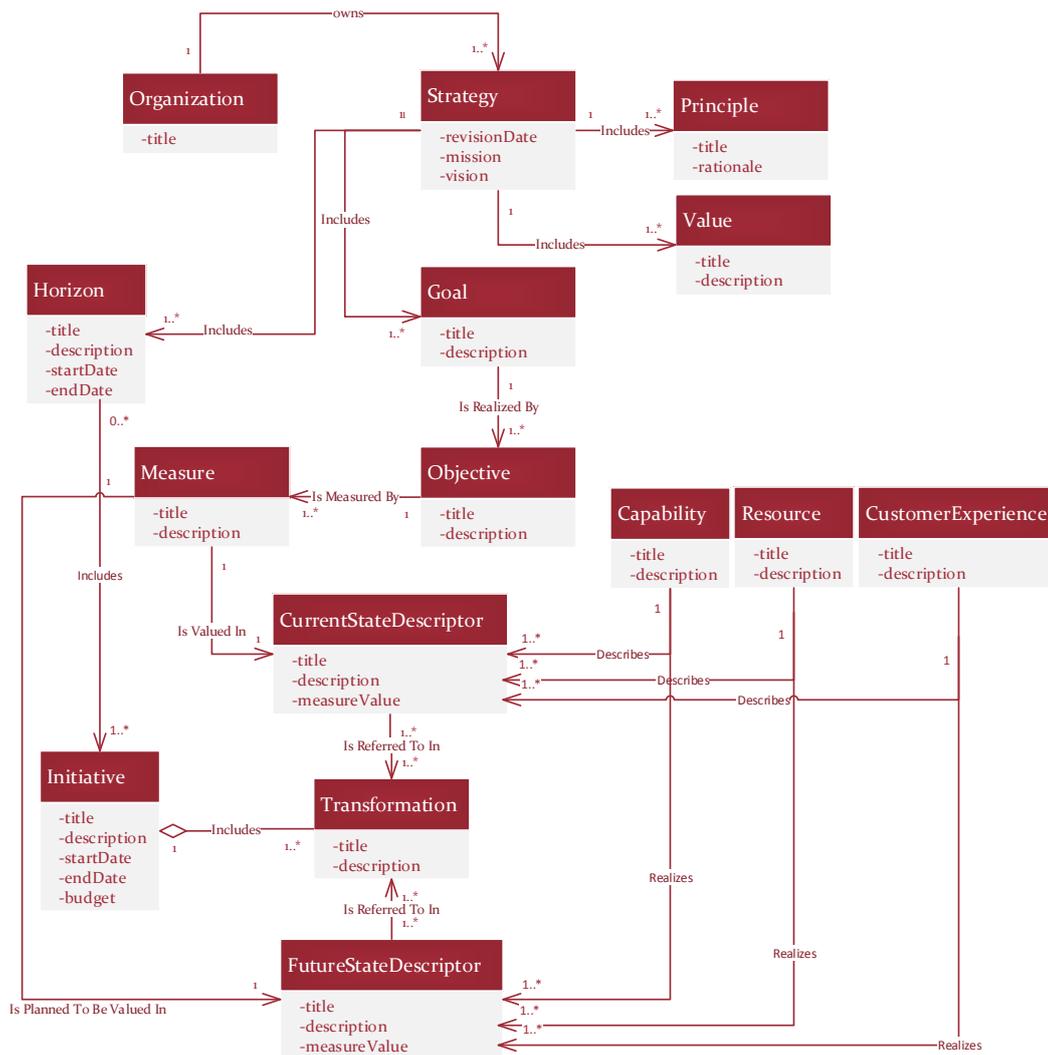


Figure 1. A metamodel for strategy description as a UML class diagram

The following statements can provide a description for the metamodel itself:

- An Organization can a set of Strategies.
- A Strategy includes a set of Principles, Goals, Values and Horizons.
- Each Goal is realized by a set of Objectives.
- Each Objective is measured by some Measures.
- Each Measure could be valued for present and future states.
- Present and future states are described by Present State Descriptors and Future State Descriptors respectively.
- A Present State Descriptor is described by Capabilities, Resources and Customer Experiences.
- A Future State Descriptor is realized by Capabilities, Resources and Customer Experiences
- Each Transformation refers to a set of Current State and Future State Descriptors.
- An Initiative includes a set of Transformations.
- Horizons include a set of Initiatives.

The proposed metamodel has been designed with the view that the current “capabilities” of an enterprise may be reflected by its “resources” [5]. Besides, “Customer Experience” has been cited as the third wing of “describing” current and future states.

4 Usage

While strategies are normally considered to be the output of a strategic planning process (like balanced scoreboards [6], Miles et al’s approach [7], strategy maps [8], and Blue Ocean strategies [9]), one could still use the proposed metamodel to establish a rational thought process on developing effective strategies without necessarily going through the entire strategic planning processes. Logically, one can articulate the statements presented in the previous chapter to form a strategy artefact and simply fill the contents through research, analysis, design and consultation, which the author highly recommends be done with the right engagement and involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

5 Conclusion

This paper proposes a metamodel for the description of strategies, their structure, elements and the relationships between such elements and can be the basis for the formulation and development of strategies. Besides, it can also help communicate strategies and link them to strategic horizons and initiatives through a natural and structured rationale.

6 References

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