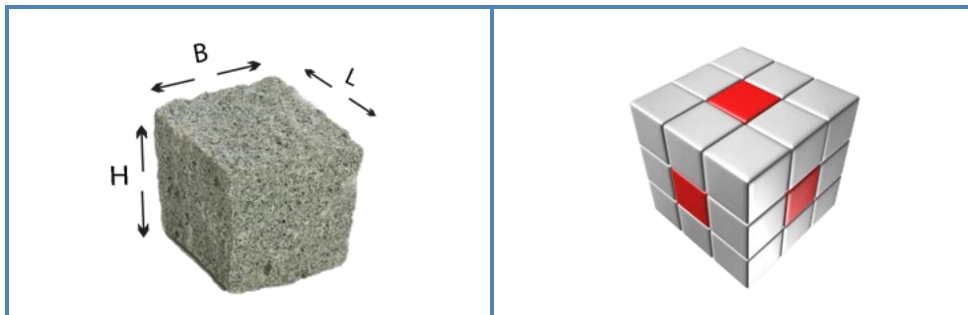


Article Paper

A Roadmap for Digitizing Business Services – Part IV

Designing Services with Service Building Blocks



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Summary

Do as the ancient Romans did: be quick – be flexible – preserve your uniqueness and work with building blocks.

If you look to the success of the Roman Empire, you will always find one core pattern: they created sustainable and unique inventions with things they already had.

Those small building blocks are what made their roads, their postal service, their environmental and public health protection (e.g. aqueductus, etc.) and their logistic dominance.

So, if you are under pressure to deliver quick gains and innovation, and are acting in a hyper-competitive market, use building blocks to win the game!

Why Re-inventing the Wheel is No Longer an Option

“If you want to operationalize a complex strategy, simplify the operational instruments of those who have to realize your ideas!”

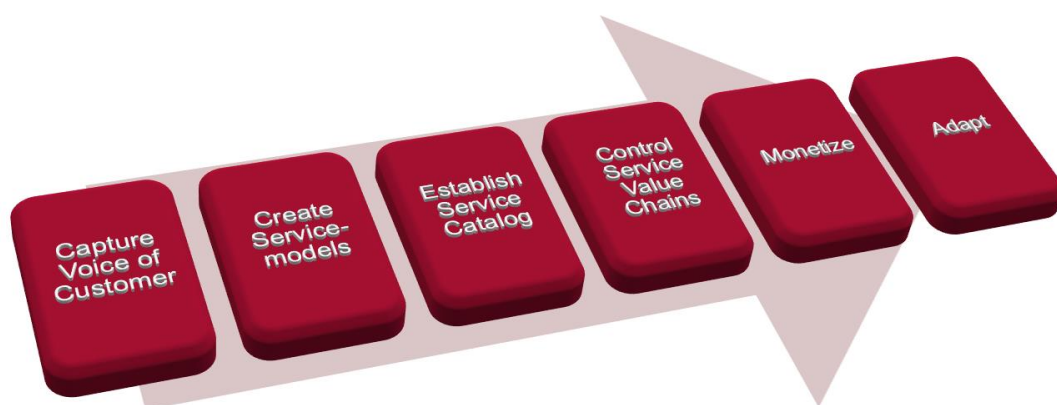
This was the recipe for success used by General Gaius Marius during the invasion of the Teutons in the Roman territory and, on a larger scale, the model of success of the Roman Empire at large.

What he did was to improve the responsivity, speed and effectivity of all Roman legions by simplifying their instruments, their logistics and, in the end, their techniques in order to win their battles.

Finally, he put a stop to the practice of all soldiers supplying and using their own individual weapons, and of legions using their own different marching formations and communication signals. He introduced instead the pilum (lance) and gladium (sword) as standard weapons, as well as standard marching formations and the decree that each individual soldier carry his own equipment.

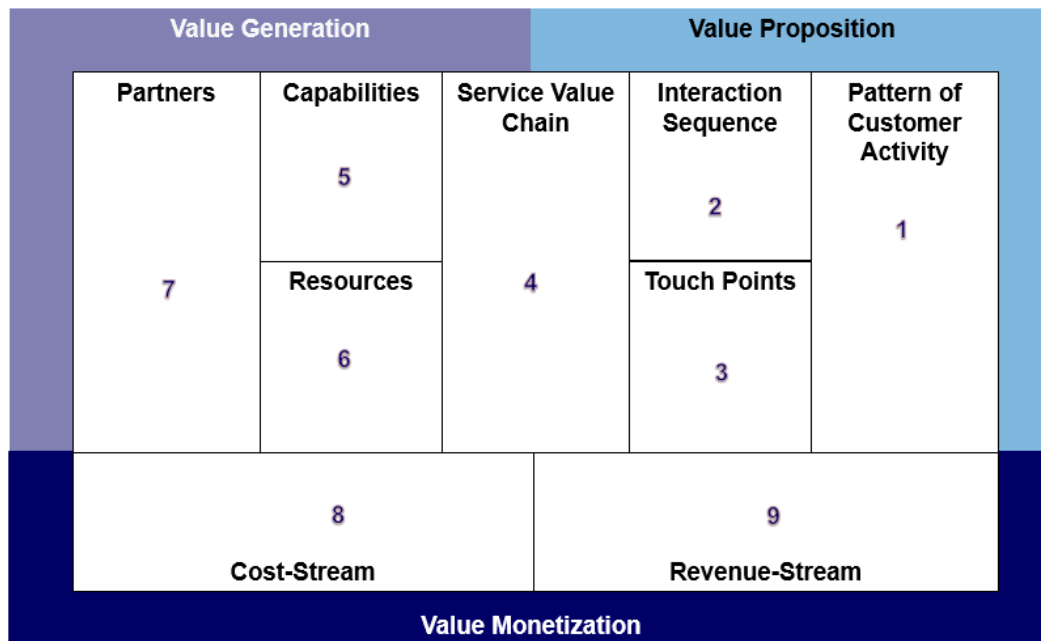
So he was able to handle complex situations with simple instruments, instead of struggling with internal complexity, and to manage simple strategic possibilities in the field much more easily.

The very first “blueprint” for digital transformation has already been shown in parts 1 to 3 of this series on digital transformation.



Starting with the “service utility or customer perception journey”, we captured the patterns of business activity. Then we transformed them into a requirements tree and collected it all together in a service requirements catalogue.

Based on this, we have rendered below a service model to submit the service definition and the target operating model of the upcoming digital service.



So this model, or structure, for our service canvas gives us the playground to draft the first solution building blocks of the planned digital service. And it is at this juncture that we turn our attention back to our old Roman general.

Like the old Romans before their glorious period of success, present-day individual experts have been wont to assume their individual perspectives, based on their own experience and points of view; subsequently developing their own building blocks and instruments, and together composing what is intended to be a successful service later on.

At the same time, even project managers (now often the centurions on the digital field) have not remembered that a lot of the building blocks within their service follow adaptable structures, customizability and reusability.

The message for service architects and digital engineers is clear:

Look around – there is more than solution building blocks at the technical layer.

Today you have structured components at all levels:



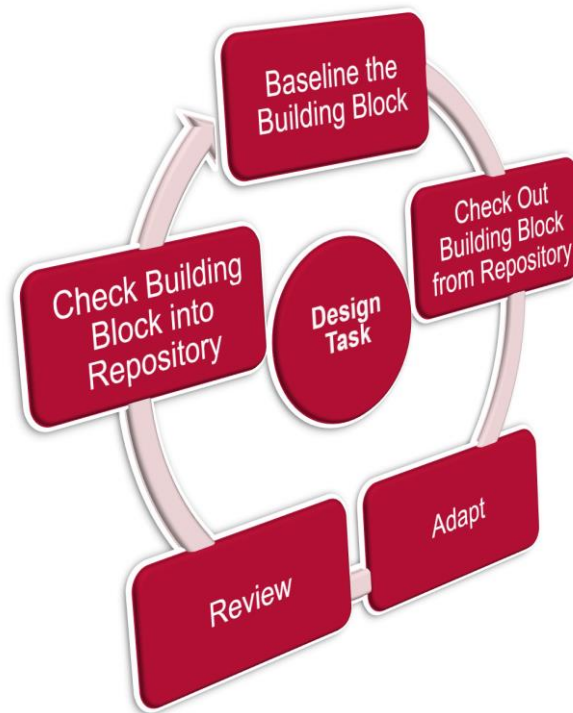
- Customer behaviour can be described along standardized action patterns
- User behaviour and specific responsibilities can be described with role profiles, RACI diagrams and process flows
- Contracts, agreements, policies and processes have found already a standardization degree which allows reusability and adaptation
- Even validation instruments (like maturity assessments, business-case-calculations, etc.) follow the law of recurring patterns.

So the question is: **Why aren't they used?**

The reason no one has seemed willing to establish an initial “arsenal” or repository with all of the necessary building blocks (such that all those parts might be checked out in a “raw” status, adapted, and checked in later on) is that making them reusable seemed too costly.

It seemed so: each professionally acting business analyst, consultant, even each well-established business consulting unit has its own libraries or “repositories”.

So those representatives of adaptive agility all act on the following pattern:



The only difference today is that there are some units who protect their repositories, and there are others who use their treasures of experience openly and transparently, and there is one reason for this:

It is not the know-how alone which is an asset in times of standardized and well documented best practice, but the know-how coupled with the capability to use the treasure of know-how stocked in the arsenals of service competition – now named service architecture repositories.

So let us take a look at how those repositories can be used within digital business service architectures:



Even this service development cycle is not that new and revolutionary. It is an adaptation of actually practised architecture behaviour. Architects do not invent. They create sustainable, impressive but affordable results with material which already exists, material that is tried and proven, and which is specified in such a way that it must only be adapted.

So to develop sustainable and impressive digital services you need two things:

1. *A repository with elements for each phase along the development cycle (as shown above);*
2. *and a simple and understandable development cycle.*

In times where go-to-market-cycles are so rapid that one can easily fall by the wayside, letting all your specialists develop all their own instruments or weapons describes exactly the situation General Marius had when the Teutons invaded Rome.

So this general opened his arsenals and saved Rome; heads of service development and COOs of companies which have to face a digital transformation do it the same way.

They create an atmosphere of innovation and creativity for those who occupy strategic positions, but they also deliver standardized and adaptable instruments to those who have to realize strategic visions.

Web-Based Repositories – A Pre-Condition for Digital Success?

Yes, they are a pre-condition of success. If you examine the acceleration effect of web-based process and solution repositories (such as Fox IT's FoxPRISM™), you will see that those repositories deliver benefits for service design you might not have considered before.

- They give orientation for those tasks which can be standardized
- They save energy needed for creativity and innovation
- They are based on proven practice, so they reduce risk
- You can train along those repositories; all those instruments you need for your personal conquest
- You are quicker, more effective and more efficient than those who still stick in the “re-inventing the wheel-mode”

Further Reading

This paper is part 4 of an ongoing series of papers about digitizing business services. Earlier parts can be accessed via the links below:

- [Part 1: A Roadmap for Digitizing Business Services](#)
- [Part 2: Taking the Customers Journey](#)
- [Part 3: Using Colours to Paint your Service](#)

About FoxPRISM™

FoxPRISM™ is a fully interactive web-based process knowledge database that assists in the design, implementation and management of service management processes. It provides a compendium of 32 processes (aligned to ITIL® and ISO/IEC 20000) and enables Fox IT consultants and their clients to accelerate their deliverables and hence realise benefits that much quicker. Click [here](#) for more details.

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