

EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION

With the requirement for **more transparency and the need for greater buy-in** from both public and private sector communities, we provide the following discussion paper to share the knowledge we have at **Martech** as to **how to achieve effective consultation**.

Our techniques have been refined and proven in successful consultative tasks we have conducted in a range of assignments that have involved community-wide groups and are about regional, sector, or national issues.



INTRODUCTION

- Increasingly it is recognised that effective **consultative processes can provide major benefits** to all stakeholders – but from what we are seeing, **many people are confused as to how to go about achieving effective consultation.**
- We agree that it is not easy – and for some time we too saw **limitations in traditional methods.** We were especially **sceptical about processes that start by a few people writing a ‘solution’ document,** and then going out to get comment about it. In some cases that might be what has to be done, but in most cases it pre-empts what stakeholders would otherwise recommend. Also, it can happen that the subject is not what stakeholders want to contribute to or talk about.
- An analogy we use is where a person has designed some furniture and wants feedback on that. In a public arena, the respondent might reply, “... *forget the table, where is the room, come to think of it, where is the building?*”
- Conventional focus groups and interviews have their place, but these may not achieve consultation that produces clear insights with:
 - (i) prioritised directions and
 - (ii) prioritised limitations and constraints ¹.

¹ These are often the limitations that need to be addressed BEFORE new strategic goals are accessible.

KEY POINTS

1. A first point we make is that in any consultative programme **there has to be a process**. If there is not, then no matter how personable the facilitator might be, community and sector meetings can be a talk-fest that takes many shapes - and so too do the outputs because by not conforming to any particular structure they are probably not related to one another.
2. The second point is that a **process should be applied consistently**. In some areas Martech have been involved in, it was not practicable nor appropriate to use exactly the same process for each audience. We can however adapt some core processes so that a shortened or adapted format can be used for different audiences.

We recommend the use of an integrated programme that uses.

- **proven techniques,**
- **involves a reasonably wide number of people,**
- and **produces an effective output** that is documented and can be update in subsequent periods.

AN EXAMPLE

A good example of this is where we designed and facilitated the Auckland City Council's consultative round for its strategic planning process².

The **main workshops used our SNAP (Stakeholder Needs Analysis Programme) format that takes about four hours per session and is best with 10 to 30 participants**^{3,4}.

To consult with tertiary students we used a shortened version, which we conducted on the Auckland University campus over a lunch period.

For the same series where we wanted **to gain input from Pacific Island and Asian communities, we trained facilitators from those communities** and had them run sessions along the lines of that used for the tertiary students⁵.

The key point we make is that **it is important that the one team designs and executes the whole programme**. This might sound like capture - but to not do it this way is to design-in fragmentation. When that is done, the work may appear to be carried out effectively by all groups having been consulted with, but the outputs probably do not relate to each other - and therefore the findings do not relate to each other.

² Regional population approx. one million people.

³ In the initial series for Auckland City, we conducted 13 workshops that involved 227 people from whom we obtained over 2,600 written observations. These were analysed into short lists of Constraints and Strategic Importance Issues. Both lists were prioritised by the participants.

⁴ The workshop series involved a wide range of participants from (i) community and (ii) business leaders, (iii) representatives of interest groups e.g. education to (iv) Central Government leaders including Members of Parliament and the Deputy Prime Minister at that time.

⁵ At the completion of the SNAP workshops for Auckland City, and the companion shorter workshops, over 400 people had participated in the workshops.

A TYPICAL FORMAT

A typical Martech assignment might be as follows:

1. Dialogue with the client team to (i) understand the nature of the problem or opportunity, and (ii) to then design a suitable format for consultation (plus cost and time frames).
2. Meet with the Client Team to commission the project. This provides an opportunity to identify the stakeholders who need to be consulted during (i) preceding 'Pulse' interviews, (ii) workshops and (iii) to assemble information about the sector/region or organisation.
3. Undertaking a series of 'Pulse' interviews with key stakeholders to determine the primary issues and the drivers for change ⁶.
4. Start developing strategy by using workshops of invited participants, representative of the stakeholders. The workshop participants themselves develop scenario options using Martech's SNAP (*Stakeholder Needs Analysis Programme*) workshop technique.
5. Additional contributions may be gathered from the sector/region or organisation using automated web-based survey questionnaire based on the workshop findings. This extends the consultation by allowing input from stakeholder participants, regardless of location, especially from those who had been unable to attend the workshops.

⁶ Martech's 'Pulse' interview technique was developed for use as an investigation tool. It requires the preparation of an interview format within defined guidelines and a proven structure. It is not designed to determine everything about an enterprise but, by 'taking-the-pulse' of an entity, it is very effective at identifying the important issues that are likely to have the greatest impact upon a given task. The information from these interviews is used to:

- (i) gain insights about key issues
- (ii) identify participant groups
- (iii) identify resource / briefing materials for workshop participants, and
- (iv) develop a 'visioning' script to be used in the SNAP workshop process

A TYPICAL FORMAT (cont'd)

6. The issues raised during the (i) 'Pulse' interviews and (ii) SNAP workshops, are aligned with the framework of Martech's schematic value chain model, or Martech's Strategic Planning Model.⁷
7. The outcomes are reviewed with the Client Team before a draft strategy is circulated to a Referent Group who are asked to provide critical comment.
8. The strategic report with recommendations, including an implementation plan, is written after further consultation with the Client Team and the final presentation made to them.

This programme format is designed to ensure that a breadth of viewpoints are canvassed among key stakeholders, and that as many people as practicable have an opportunity to contribute to the strategic development of the sector/region or organisation.

⁷ *Martech's Strategic Planning Model* is an in-house process that is robust and produces strongly market and stakeholder focussed strategies for all types and sizes of organisations. It is especially helpful to persons who have previously not participated in formal strategy development or market planning, but it is advanced enough for those who have.

SNAP WORKSHOPS

Martech's Stakeholder Need Analysis Programme (SNAP) is a workshop process that involves facilitated discussion, individual contribution by all participants, and individual and then group review of all contributions to **establish a ranking of issues identified**⁸.

The SNAP process is designed to ensure that the views of all attendees are included but limits undue influence by vocal minorities. It has proven to be an excellent mechanism to achieve consensus of views.

We have found that this process **works very well in the consultative phase where we need clear input** from identified stakeholders. This programme has been the basis for our having been invited to provide answers for a number of sector groups. Examples in the primary sector⁹ are where we developed a strategy for

- the *Food & Beverage* sector. This was cited by ...
- the *Forestry Sector* who asked us to do the same for them. The Forestry task also led on to work in
- the *Fishing* sector. Subsequently we conducted a full review and strategy development for the 'NZ Agrichemical Education Trust' (*Growsafe*[®]) that required us to seek input from most sections of
- the *Agricultural* community, e.g. arable etc, in addition to
- *Horticulture* where we have carried out several assignments.

Two further assignments have been in the development of strategies for ...

- the *Organics* sector (who later gave us a notable award)
- and in the development of an R&D strategy for the very successful *Wine Industry*.

⁸ The SNAP process is designed to ensure that the views of all attendees are included but limits undue influence by vocal minorities. It has proven to be an excellent mechanism to achieve consensus of views.

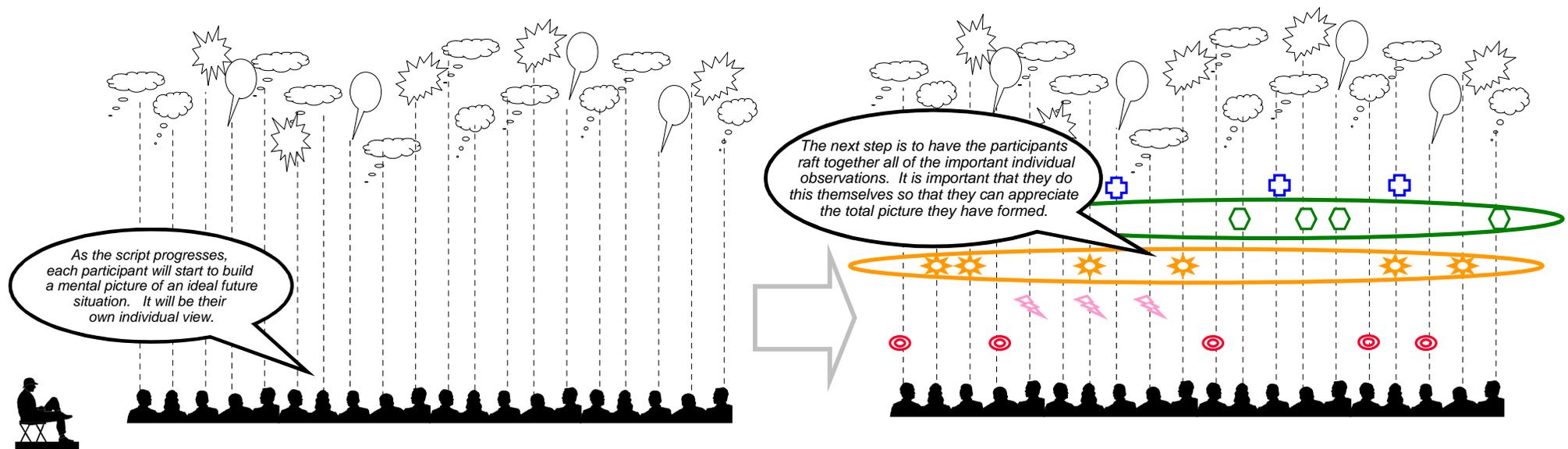
⁹ Martech has also successfully applied its SNAP and strategic planning models in tourism (national award), health, trade development, manufacturing and sport

MARTECH'S SNAP WORKSHOP PROCESS

Each SNAP process workshop has four components:

1. Discussion and challenging of limitations, constraints and hazards.
2. A visioning segment using a script prepared with the assistance of the sponsor or nominated referees.
3. Prioritising of the strategic importance issues as determined by the workshop participants.
4. Discussion on strategy and key success factors and competencies to achieve the highest-ranked strategic importance issues.

The Visioning step is a vital component

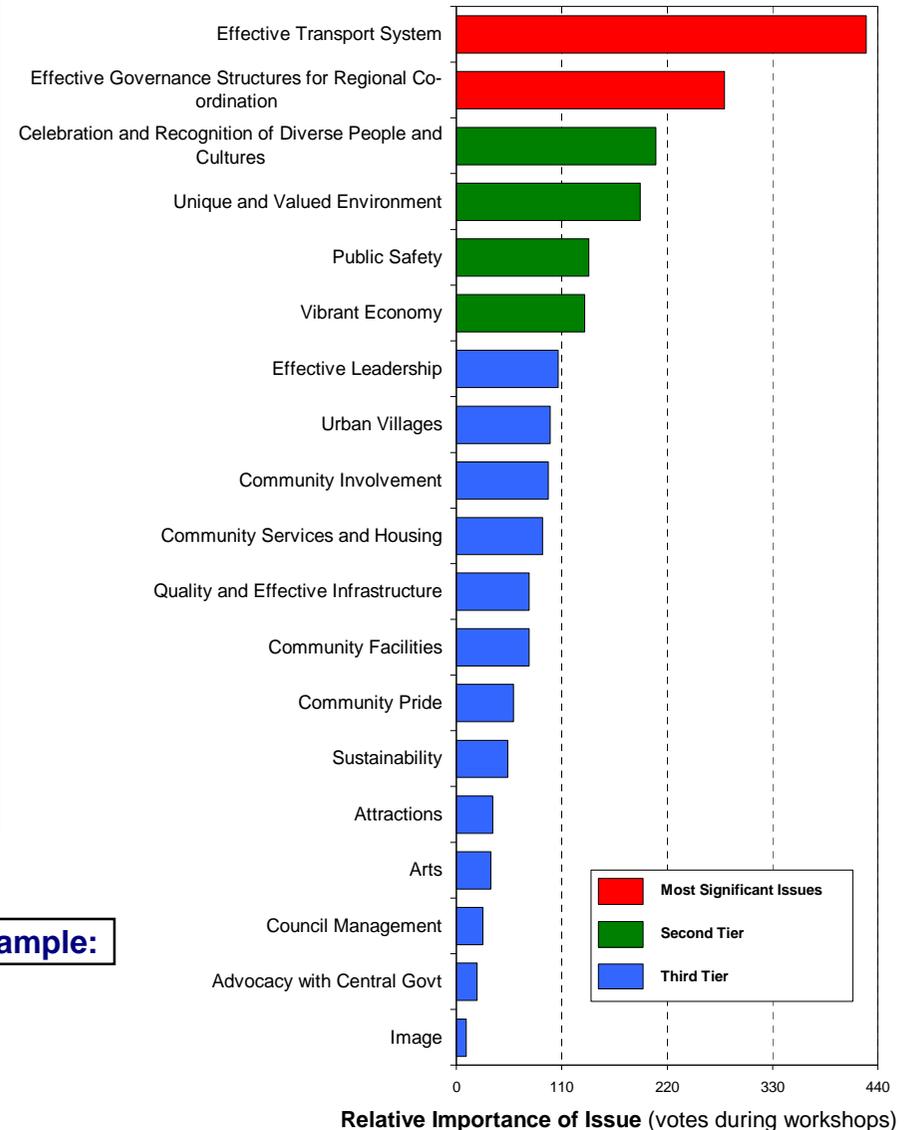


What the workshop process achieves

- A well-facilitated four-hour workshop using the SNAP process delivers much of the information needed for a task team to prepare a strategy.
- Importantly, the process leaves participants with an appreciation of having contributed to an effective and satisfying process.
- As a result, the SNAP process sets the scene for ‘ownership’ of the outcomes of the workshop.
- At the completion of the workshop series, the outputs are analysed into a well developed and clear presentation that shows:
 - (a) the key items identified by the participants, and
 - (b) the relative importance of each

Strategic Importance Issues - workshop scores - example:

Relative Importance of Strategic Issues in the Development of Auckland



THE SPECIAL ADVANTAGES OF THE SNAP PROCESS

- The **process is non-threatening** and all **issues / ideas and conclusions are determined by the participants** - NOT the facilitators.
- The **process collapses time** as for much of the workshop participants are contributing simultaneously.
- A **typical SNAP workshop will produce 300 or more individual observations** on constraints and/or issues of future importance.
- **Summary headings are traceable back to individual observations.** This **radically reduces misinterpretation.**
- The **process builds consensus** - expressed by one participant (unprompted) as *“I was surprised how, with each of us having different views, we were able to reach agreement”*.
- A **high level of buy-in** is achieved as all participants contribute to the process - and often congratulate themselves upon achieving defined and agreed conclusions.
- The **process is an excellent foundation for subsequently reporting strategy plans back to participants** - and identifying how their observations were used.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS - for larger numbers of participants

The SNAP workshop is best suited for purposely-selected groups (a 'purposive' sample) of 10 to 30 persons.

Where greater numbers need to be polled, *Community Workshops* and *Automated Web-based Surveys* are two processes we have used successfully.

Community Workshops

Our Community Workshops also have a set **format with participation by all attendees to gain direct and specific input, and to help buy-in to the outcomes.**

In one example, (ref. NSGC) we had 175 persons participating in two workshops. These were each of two and a half-hours duration. Each workshop used eight syndicates. Between the 16 syndicates across the two workshops, over 450 observations were noted.

This style of workshop gives direct participation to a wide range of people and produces clear and prioritised results that can be matched to the more rigorous SNAP workshops with community and business leaders ¹⁰.

- A point with these is that whilst shorter in duration, and where the exact number of participants is not known before the event starts, there is a *structure* and the outputs can be aligned with SNAP workshop outputs.

¹⁰ In a second example (ref. Te Atatu) a single workshop promoted by a local business association working with a local city council's 'Urban Revitalisation Unit', our Community Workshop Programme was used under the banner of a '*Moving Ahead Planning Meeting*'. In the space of two and a half-hours, over 50 people were briefed on local issues, discussed options, identified nine clear topics and prioritised these with vote scores ranging from 110 down to zero.

AUTOMATED ON-LINE SURVEY

An option is to also have an automated web-based (www) survey to obtain wider participation and comment on workshop outcomes. This process provides an opportunity for a wider range of participants to be involved, irrespective of their geographic location. The co-operation of client groups is sought in promoting the opportunity to participate via this medium.

An Automated Online Survey conducted during August and September 2002 had a questionnaire available on the Martech website. The survey results were based upon 415 unique respondents in a participant mix of 59% respondents directly involved in the subject sector as producers (26%), service providers (20%) and trade (13%).

The process allows for inputs by every participant to be automatically added to a database and the in-built tools produce clear graphs of the findings on each question answered. This option helps to develop a consensus on the key strategic issues to be addressed and to obtain wide buy-in.

WHY MARTECH ?

- **Reliable processes** - but adapted to each situation and not wedded to a rigid framework
- **Vast experience** which has proven to be invaluable in circumstances that can have unique aspects
- All Martech consultants are at the **senior level in terms of both management experience and consulting experience**
- A **level of cultural understanding** that can only come from extensive and in-depth experience in working in a range of environments
- Martech experience can **provide access to insights that enhance the thinking and experience** of the client team
- Martech consultants expect to complement the client's knowledge of close detail with external perspectives that **produce a balanced framework and more robust outcomes**
- Martech **always expect to add value beyond the brief** of an immediate task.

We are happy to discuss any task taking shape and help design a practicable process for a given situation.

FINAL WORDS - from the participants of one workshop series

“Smart mix of techniques for gaining contribution”

“Thought providing - moved my comfort level”

“Very good, allowed participation”

“Could have been longer”

“Made the most of the four hours available”

About Martech

Martech is a strategic consultancy with significant experience in:

- Investigation, consultation and facilitation
- Strategy development
- Strategic management
- Development of marketing plans and their implementation
- Optimising innovation and knowledge
- Enhancing business value
- Governance development and evaluation

- All of Martech's work is with national organisations, or businesses or organisations that have national significance.

The key person for contact at Martech is its Director, Alastair Aitken

Alastair Aitken

- Alastair is the Director of Martech Consulting Group and he has been a management consultant for over 20 years. He has worked with a wide range of organisations in New Zealand and off-shore totalling over 150 enterprises. He was a senior consultant with international PA Consulting Group for 12 years before establishing Martech Consulting Group Ltd in 1996. He has had consulting projects with private and public sector clients, including assignments for the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.
- In strategic planning work, Alastair is a past winner of a national marketing award – for establishing The Helicopter Line – now THL. He consulted to them for over 10 years.
- Alastair was the primary author of Martech's *Strategic Planning* process and also its *Stakeholder Needs Analysis Programme* – a consultative workshop that is especially effective in helping disparate groups to agree on strategic issues. He has been involved in the development of Martech's *governance programmes* from their inception in the 1990s and has been involved in all of Martech's governance assignments.
- In working with diverse groups in strategy and governance, an example is his work with the Organic Sector. The diversity of the people involved in that sector would be as wide as any sector. In 2005, the national body for organics presented Alastair and Martech with an award in recognition of their work in helping that sector to establish a new national organisation, strategy and governance framework.

CONTACT

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Lifelines for Organisations

- **Effective Consultation** processes produce high value inputs for strategy and management. Organisations also need to have effective strategic planning, governance and implementation processes.
- Based on our experience in helping organisations become more effective and of more value to stakeholders, MARTECH have progressively developed and refined an integrated set of modules under the title of **Lifelines for Organisations**.
- On page 17 following is a diagram for application of the four modules and on page 18 a schedule of some examples of where modules have been effectively applied. A separate brochure is available outlining the four modules.
- Each organisation is expected to have aspects that are unique, requiring adaptation of the modules selected. Martech would be pleased to discuss where and how a particular module might be applied.

Proven processes to help organisations achieve what they hoped to. We call them ‘Lifelines’ because they connect sound management practices that might otherwise expose organisations to gaps, perhaps chasms, and avoidable difficulties.

Based on our experience in helping organisations become more effective and of more value to stakeholders, MARTECH has progressively developed and refined an integrated set of modules under the title of *Lifelines for Organisations* that link together

- Consultation / investigation, with
- Strategic planning, and
- Governance policy development and a Board Members Handbook (for direction, process and induction).

Lifelines for Organisations is a powerful set of management processes and the way they link together is probably unique. They are especially suitable for people not used to operating in a disciplined business environment – but advanced enough for those who are.

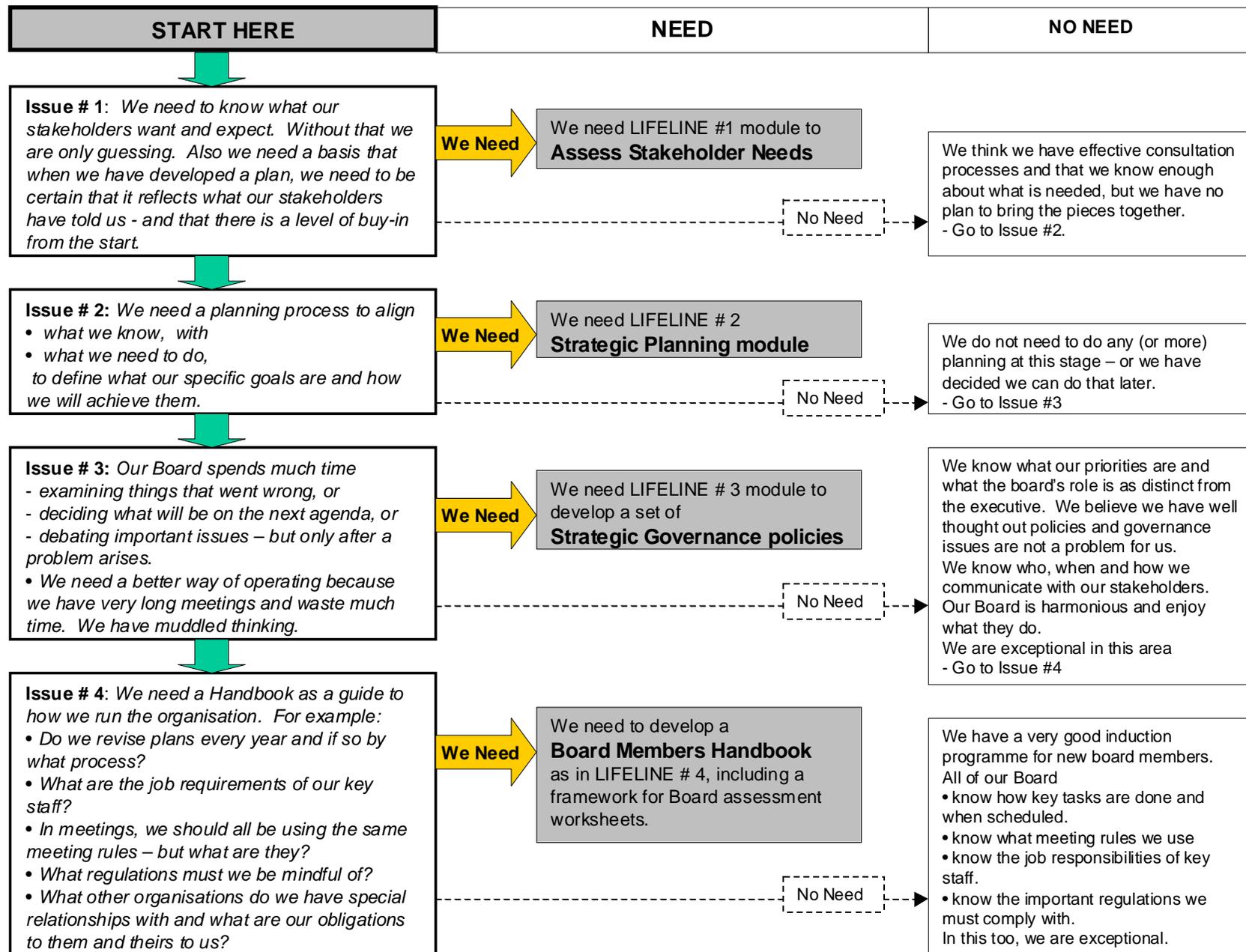
BACKGROUND

Every organisation is different, but there are frameworks to make things a lot better than they usually are. Faced with the question “*how do you go about setting up or refining an organisation*”, the *Lifelines for Organisations* modules bring together our learning as to where to start and outlines how the main planks fit together.

What the Martech team have found is that the theory is important, but often the translation from theory to practice is too complicated or it comes with having to bring in consultants who cost far more than the organisation is prepared to invest. We too were concerned that there had to be a better way.

Starting in the mid 1980s, Martech consultants have progressively developed and refined an integrated set of tools and techniques that have proved to be very effective. Each ‘Lifeline’ process has been thoroughly tested and we can cite client testimonials to support this. Also important is that each has been improved with refinements to ensure that they work well, link together and reflect best practice.

- On following page is a diagram for application of the four modules and on a further page is a schedule of examples of where modules have been effectively applied. A separate brochure is available outlining the four modules.
- Each organisation is expected to have aspects that are unique, requiring adaptation of the modules selected. Martech would be pleased to discuss where and how a particular module might be applied.



Examples where Martech's LIFELINE Modules have been used

	Lifeline # 1 S.N.A.P. Workshops	Lifeline # 2 Strategic Plans	Lifeline # 3 Strategic Governance	Lifeline # 4 Board Handbook	
Auckland City Council	X (14)				Over 400 persons involved; the basis for city strategic plan development
BioGro			X	X	Development of governance policies and Board Members Handbook materials
Centre of Excellence - Bio-sciences	X				Joint task for Massey Univ., HortResearch, Crop & Food, AgResearch
Cook Islands Govt./ Asian Dev. Bank	X	X			Establishment of Business Development Board (like a TradeNZ)
Fishing Sector R&D	X				For The Royal Society of NZ
Forestry sector R&D	X (4)				R&D Strategy for NZ Forest Industries Council
Gullivers / Holiday Shoppe	X				Workshop with franchisees to review strategy
Kingdom of Nepal / UNDP - World Bank		X (3)			Privatisation / commercialisation of paper mill, brick and leather & shoe factories
Kingdom of Tonga / Asian Dev. Bank		X (3)			Commodities Board privatisation tasks
Large independent school			X	X	Also assistance with subsequent governance review
MAF Policy / Codex	X (2)				To define NZ position on standards for foods derived from biotechnology
NZ Agrichemical Education Trust	X				Review of <i>GrowSafe</i> programmes and Trust strategy development
Organic Sector	X (4)		X	X	Development of Organic Sector Strategy leading to Establishment Board
Republic of Kiribati / Asian Dev. Bank		X (12)			Privatisation of 12 state-owned enterprises: hotels, airline, trading businesses, etc.
The Helicopter Line (now THL)		X			Original investigation and successive market development input
Waitakeri City Council	X				Community workshop for 50 persons - Te Atatu peninsula community development
NZ Winegrowers		X			R&D Strategy for New Zealand's wine industry
Vision Manawatu	X				Framework for a NZ Animal Health Research Network - based on Inst. of Vet. & Animal Biosciences (IVABS) and Hopkirk Research Inst.

Martech have also carried out many other assignments that investigate and develop improved outcomes - from restructures to market research and case studies.