



COMPASS WORKSHEETS

The Compass helps tackle complex problems by generating novel, actionable ideas.

Most business problems are systems problems. The Compass is a tool that simplifies complex systems problems, without losing important information.

The Compass applies the concept of wayfinding to guide you through blind spots and uncertainty. Much like a physical compass helps you navigate through unfamiliar terrain, iterating through the various spaces of our Compass will take you closer to your North and Near Stars within complex systems where information may be incomplete or outcomes are unpredictable.

Get started by printing off these worksheets or [using the template in Miro!](#)

**INNOVATION
NORTH**



NORTH AND NEAR STARS

The North Star keeps the organization's purpose in mind. The Near Star keeps the project's goals in mind. Both stars point to a desirable future and should align with each other.



Write your organization's North Star. Many organizations call this their purpose, vision, or mission.



Write your innovation project's Near Star. Include project goals and desired outcomes.

PROBLEM

A problem is the gap between where you are and where you want to be. How you frame the problem will shape your ideas and actions, so keep revisiting this space to ensure you have framed the problem appropriately.

What is the problem that you need to tackle? To the extent possible, indicate how where you are now differs from where you want to be.

Describe the problem from different perspectives. Show how your problem affects multiple actors.



AWARENESS (1 OF 2)

Building awareness helps you understand the system. It's crucial that you consult with others to learn about the system surrounding the problem. There are two parts to building awareness: complexifying and then simplifying.

Identify key actors and activities: Draw boxes around relevant actors and their activities (e.g. "manufacturer produces goods").

Connect boxes: Draw arrows among boxes to illustrate the flow of goods, services, information, money, etc.

Identify frictions: Near the boxes or arrows, write the relevant frictions that are particularly salient to the problem. Frictions can be obstacles, constraints, or challenges that hinder progress toward addressing the problem or achieving desired outcomes.

AWARENESS (2 OF 2)

Simplify the Map: Remove information that does not help you to understand the problem. Your map should be simple and easy to understand.

IDEAS (1 OF 2)

Ideas are potential solutions or opportunities to tackle the problem. Working with others will help you ideate. There are two steps: brainstorming by adding ideas, and then clustering the exciting ones.

Brainstorm ideas: Use sticky notes and write one idea per sticky note. Be creative and don't filter.

Filter ideas: Once done, move the stickies with the most exciting ideas to the next box. If you are working with others, you can ask participants to add dots to the ideas that excite them.

IDEAS (2 OF 2)

Clustering: Cluster ideas with other similar ideas. Some ideas may stand alone. Give each cluster a short, summarizing title.

ACTIONS (1 OF 2)

Actions are steps you can take on the way to your Near Star. They serve as waypoints. There are two parts to this worksheet: mapping the idea clusters, then identifying the actions you will take to execute on the ideas cluster.

Map clusters of ideas: Place the cluster labels on the timeline below. Connect clusters of ideas with arrows, if they are contingent on each other.



ACTIONS (2 OF 2)

Ecologies of actions: Take one to three idea clusters from above that you can act on soon. Identify the ecology of actions needed to execute them. Use coloured dots that correspond to the idea cluster to signal actions that apply to more than one cluster.

	IDEA CLUSTER 1	IDEA CLUSTER 2	IDEA CLUSTER 3
ACTOR 1	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM
ACTOR 2	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM
ACTOR 3	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM
ACTOR 4	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM	ACTION: WHAT, BY WHEN, WITH WHOM

(Add additional rows as needed)

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(Add additional rows as needed)