



Benefits Mapping

Increasing technology solution sales in difficult markets

Abstract

Technology solution providers who want to sell in tough markets must show their customers how real business benefits result from proposed technology solutions.

Benefits Mapping is a practical technique that, when used as described in this paper, can provide a new approach to increase the customer's understanding of the business benefits they will achieve.

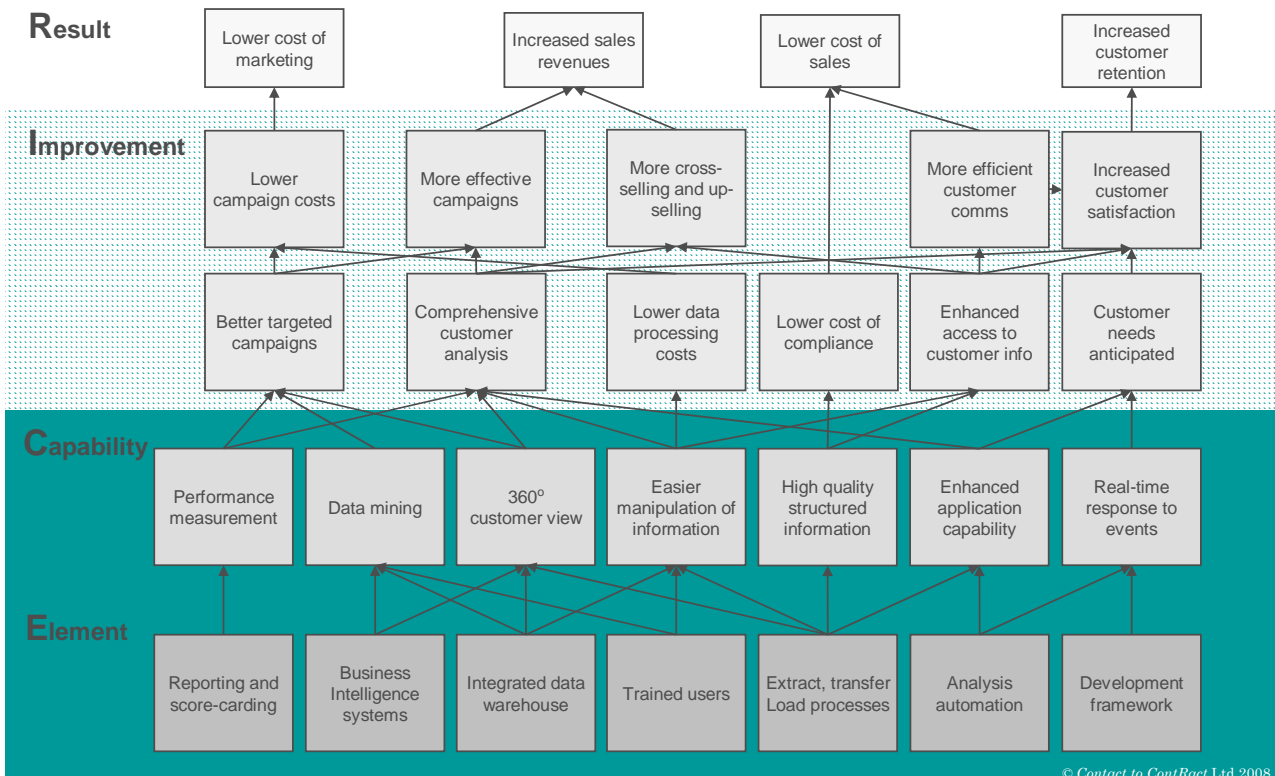
The approach provides big advantages to the supplier, enabling them radically to improve solution development, marketing and, most important, to increase sales and competitive edge — even when customers are reluctant to spend.

Overview

Technology solution providers, who want to sell business in tough markets, must help their customers to understand very clearly how real business benefits arise from their technology solutions. They may also need to give customers good advice and practical help to ensure the benefits will be achieved. Benefits Mapping provides technology suppliers with a very practical way to increase the customer’s perception of the value that they provide.

The technique is, in principle, very simple. A Benefits Map is created which is summarised into a diagram with four layers: the *RICE™* Map, that shows how business **Results** arise from **Improvements** in the business, which in turn arise from the new **Capabilities** provided by the key **Elements** of the technology solution. Here is an example *RICE™* Map for a Customer Relationship Management technology solution.

RICE™ Map: Customer Relationship Management



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The *RICE™* Map provides a “management summary” of the linkage between the elements of the technology solution and the results the customer will achieve.



Background

Technology solutions¹ are purchased by organisations to generate a business return: broadly this is to cut costs, increase sales or improve service. For customers to make such investments they must be confident of three things

- That the technology solution is relevant to their business issues and priorities and, if so, will provide the required benefits.
- That the benefits will justify the costs, providing a financial return on the investment in as short a time as possible.
- That the expected benefits can be realised by the organisation and the risks managed effectively.

The technology solutions providers who best demonstrate how they will deal with these questions will enjoy competitive edge and be well placed to grow market share, even in difficult markets.

The Problem

Technology solutions providers bring new capabilities, but a capability is just and only that: the potential to do a thing. There is a huge difference between having a capability (for example, installing a data mining product) and putting it into practice by using it to support a business improvement (for example, to use the product systematically and reliably to detect credit card fraud).

It can often be difficult for customers to understand

- Which elements of a technology solution are relevant to their business and exactly how their business will improve as a result.
- What business changes they will need to manage in order to make the new system effective.
- How these improvements will translate into financial (or non-financial²) benefits sufficient to justify the investment.
- How to ensure that the promised benefits will indeed result.

¹ In this discussion we define a “technology solution” as any or all of technology, software, services, consulting and related work (including process definitions, training, communications and management and so on).

² In some cases, particularly in the public sector or not-for-profit organisations, important benefits may not readily be translated into financial values.



- Which of the bewildering array of product features and services are relevant.

Of course, some sales professionals (including business development executives, account directors and so on) do an excellent job of helping the customer understand the answers to at least some of these questions. But in general, while technology solution sales professionals have expertise in presenting the capabilities that their solutions provide, it can be a struggle to relate those capabilities clearly to the improvements in the customer's business and to the results the customer will achieve, which is, of course the main reason why the customer invests.

This is not surprising. The way in which capabilities drive business improvements in any specific situation is often not straightforward and can be hard fully to understand and express. Even if some individuals are able to make the intuitive leap, they may well not understand **every** benefit the solution can provide, leaving important ones unexpressed. In any event, they may struggle to communicate their understanding to others.

In short, there is a communication gap which is a problem for both the supplier and the customer. For the customer

- It is difficult to identify exactly what benefits can be expected.
- It is difficult to identify which key stakeholders (usually line executives) will be affected.
- Consequently, it is hard to get the commitment from those key stakeholders to do what is needed to make the programme a success.
- The financial business case (where one exists) may be easily challenged if those required to sign it off do not have a clear picture of how the programme will deliver benefits.

In short, it is hard for individuals within the customer who may intuitively see the benefits, to explain them to their own colleagues, making it difficult to build a consensus for action.

It is also a big problem for the supplier

- It is hard to get the customer's attention in the first place. The customer doesn't understand how these products and services can help.
- A lot of time can be wasted trying unsuccessfully to explain the value of the proposed solution.
- An opportunity is missed to differentiate from competition. The supplier is just another peddler of



technology until the connection is made to the customer's benefits.

- Many sales professionals do not feel equipped to relate their solutions to real customer business problems. This marginalises their worth in the customer's eyes.
- A sales professional who only talks about the features and capabilities of the solution is just treated as a commodity supplier, leaving them vulnerable to a price squeeze and competition.
- The opportunity to help the customer with his business case is missed – done well, this would enhance the relationship with the customer and clarify the exact specification of the solution.
- It is hard to predict when deals will close. Invariably they take longer than expected and wished for.

Benefits Mapping

Benefits Mapping provides a valuable tool to address all these problems.

A complete Benefits Map consists of a detailed analysis of the flow of benefit as it arises from the elements of the technology solution. This analysis is summarised in the diagram with four layers (the *RICE*TM Map) illustrated above, which provides a summary of the flow of benefit.

The *RICE*TM Map is, in effect, the management summary, of the Benefits Map. The full Benefits Map also includes more detailed analysis in the form of “drill downs” (to look at the relationship between the entities,³ and to provide further detail about each entity) where required.

The *RICE*TM Map is a valuable communication tool.

How is the technique used?

The technique is best employed by a technology supplier in a three-pass process.

- First, the solution supplier creates example Benefits Maps for
 - * a particular business problem
 - * in a particular vertical market
 - * for relevant elements of the product or service.

From this work the example *RICE*TM Map is created.

³ Entity is the generic term for the specific items on the *RICE*TM Map, or the drill down, that is, the individual Elements, Capabilities, Improvements and Results.



- Second, the example *RICE*TM Maps are then used in their relevant markets to enable the sales professionals to understand better how their solutions add value, and then as a part of the prospecting process, when the examples are used to get the customer's attention.
- Third, where necessary, the Benefit Map is customised to be specific to the customer's business as part of the sales process.

So what?

The technique provides benefits to the supplier's marketing function, solution (or product) development function and the sales organisation. By working together to create example Benefit Maps

- It ensures solution development has the information they need to spend their time where customers get most benefit.
- It enables marketing to make good decisions about the markets to target and how best to communicate with those markets in relevant business terms.
- It provides the sales team with valuable selling tools that enables much better sales technique.

Specifically for the sales team

- It enables the sales team to prospect more effectively, and more easily get the customer's attention.
- It enables the sales team to "climb the value chain", to demonstrate more value and improve the quality and relevance of the customer conversation.
- It helps the customer to understand much more specifically how they will get the benefits.
- It enables the sales team to work with the customer to construct a well-grounded financial business case.⁴
- It helps to create an implementation approach that maximises the achievement of the benefits⁵ and minimises the risks.
- It identifies more quickly the stakeholders in the proposed investment enabling everyone to understand more quickly and easily who will need to "buy in".

⁴ Using *BenefitMAPPER*TM techniques. See next page

⁵ As above



- It provides a valuable communications tool with stakeholders and the ultimate approvers of the capital spend.

The customer becomes more committed to the programme as they understand better how they will benefit and so can articulate the business case clearly. This enables access to the funding they need, because the business case is easier to understand and more difficult to challenge.

For the supplier's sales team these advantages lead to more opportunities, improved deal size and win rate, a shorter sales cycle, lower sales costs and less pressure on margins. It also enables more productive marketing and solution development.

BenefitMAPPER™

BenefitMAPPER™ is *ChangeBEAT's* extensive *ToolKIT* and facilitated implementation methodology that enables technology suppliers to implement Benefit Mapping and associated techniques as a part of the strategic marketing, solution development and sales process

BenefitMAPPER™ is delivered by *ChangeBEAT* consultants and consists of extensive tools, templates, databases, spreadsheets, process guides, briefings and structured training materials. In a typical engagement, we work with you to understand where you would most benefit from using these techniques, and then to help you create your own customised *BenefitMAPPER ToolKIT*. We help you to drive improvements to your marketing and solution development process where necessary and then help you to roll the *ToolKIT* out to the field with appropriate supporting training. We recommend ongoing support and assistance as the technique is deployed.

BenefitMAPPER™ includes clearly defined methods and tools for creating the financial business case from the *RICE™* Map, and for devising benefits management strategies.

The Acid Test

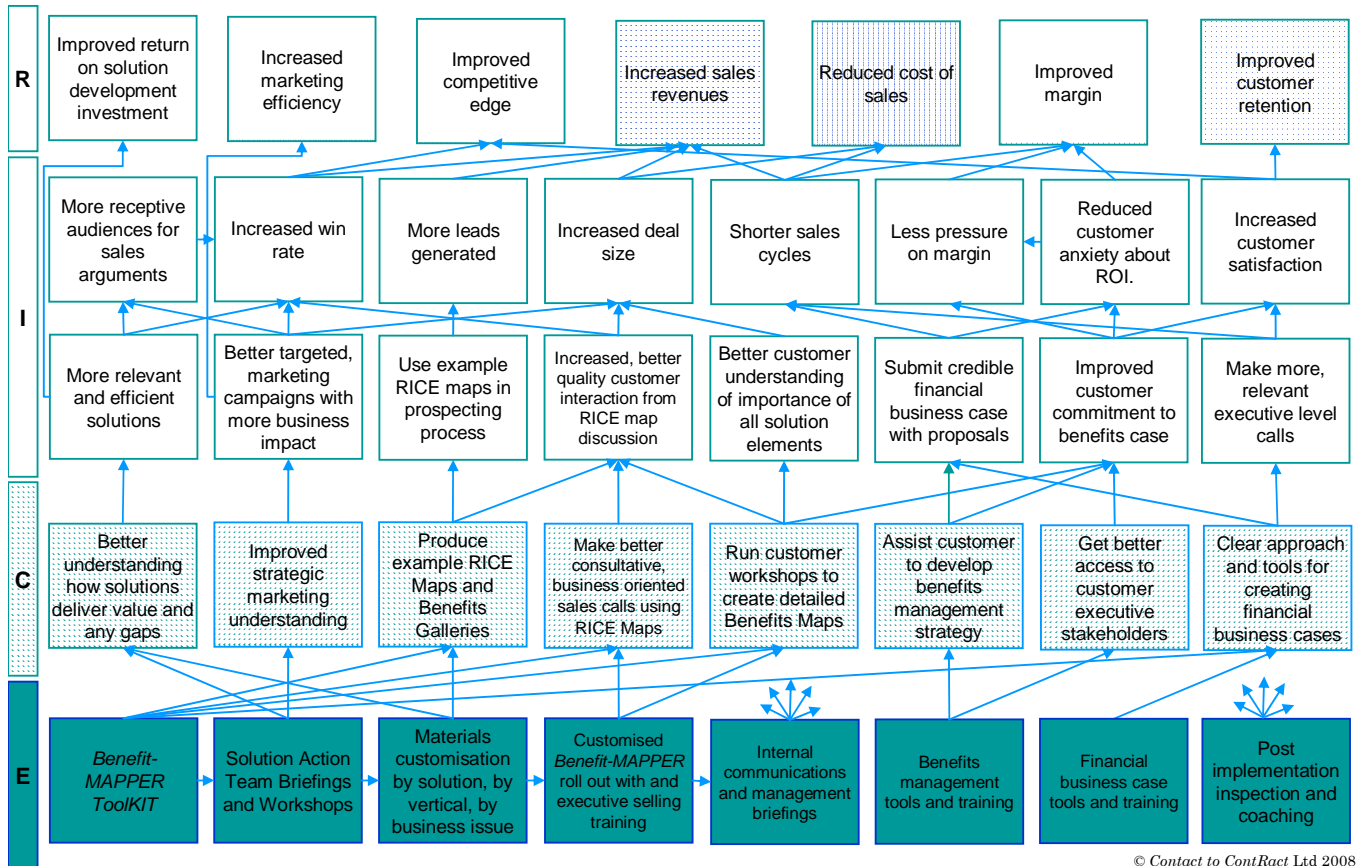
So, you have read this far, and you might well be wondering how all these ideas might fit together and how much it would benefit **your** organisation if you were able to use these ideas, just as your customers do when confronted with your solutions.

Time for the acid test. Have a look at the *RICE™* Map on the next page. This is a map with a difference for it describes the results **you** would get from implementing *BenefitMAPPER™* in **your** organisation.



BenefitMAPPER™ – what are the benefits for you?

RICE™ Map: BenefitMAPPER Implementation



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This RICE™ Map shows an example of how the Elements of a BenefitMAPPER™ implementation would give you, the technology solutions supplier, a new set of Capabilities, which drive Improvements in **your** business and deliver the Results shown in the top line.

If you can see the potential, why don't we talk?



ChangeBEAT – technology business experts and change management specialists.

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