Making tactical content decisions
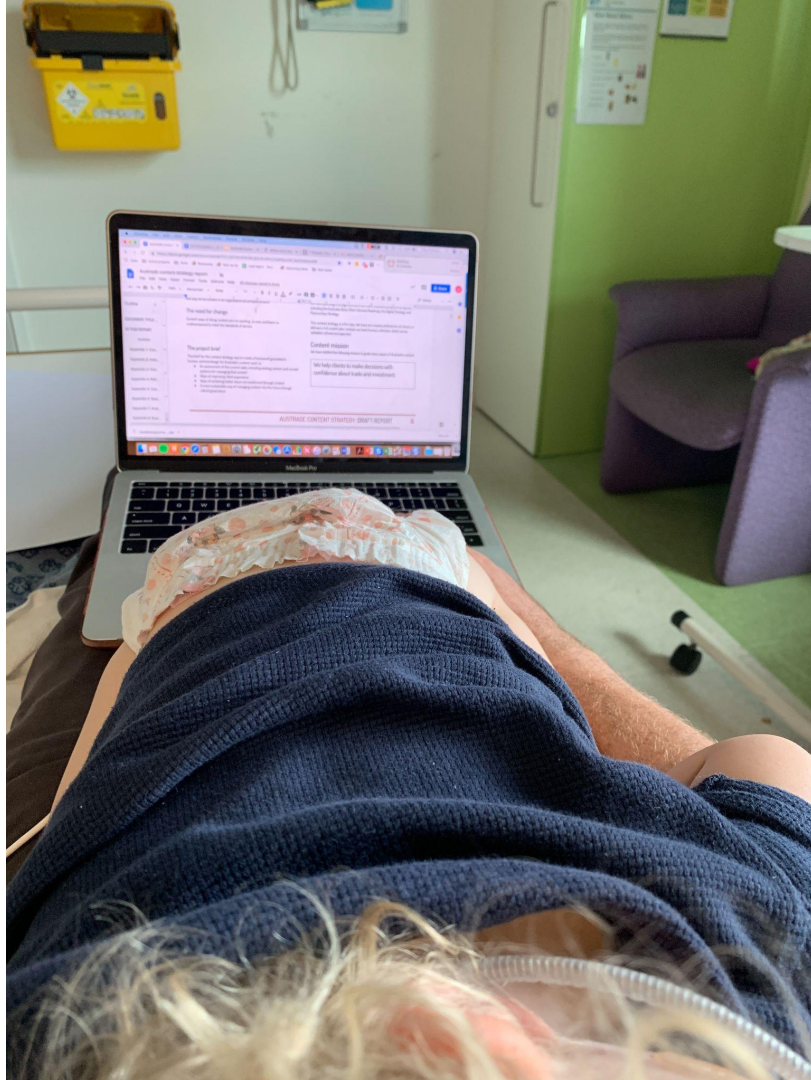
True North Content

About me

It all began when...

What I knew to be true

Organisations are drowning in possibilities

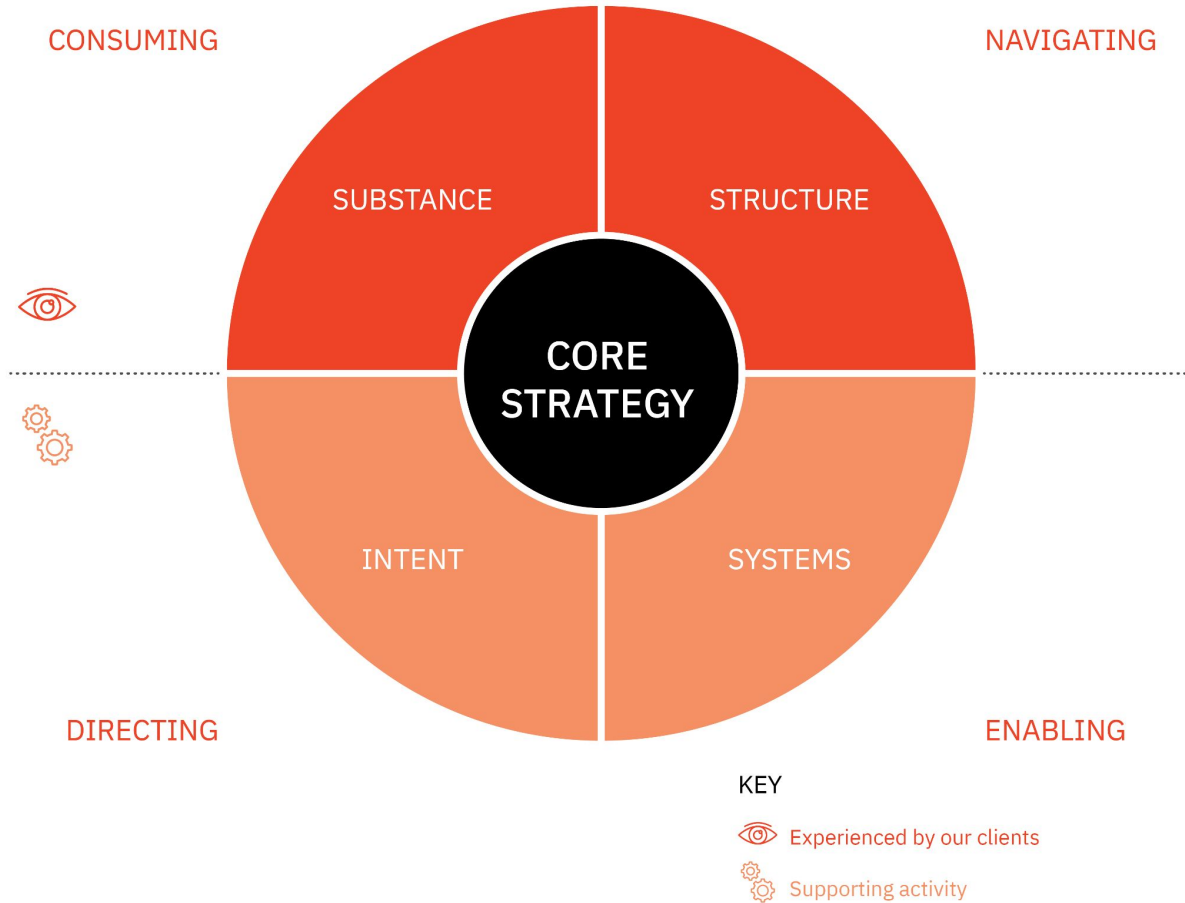Decisions on priorities are often made reactively or based on ill-fitting agendas

'Below the line' or 'backstage' factors are often not adequately considered

The flow-through from strategic vision to execution is not always captured well
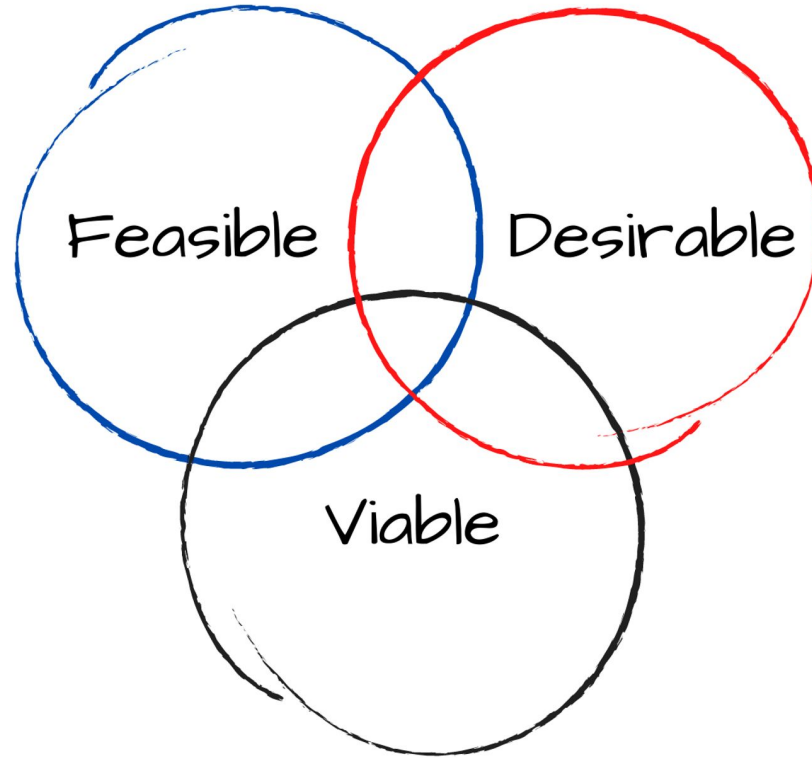
Models for understanding

CONSUMING

NAVIGATING

SUBSTANCE

STRUCTURE

CORE
STRATEGY

INTENT

SYSTEMS

DIRECTING

ENABLING

KEY

Experienced by our clients

Supporting activity

Adapted from the
content strategy quad
by Kristina Halvorson

Content Strategy Inc.

Strategic Content Strategy Canvas

Findings and Foundation	Guiding Focus	Action Plan

Findings and Foundation

Business needs and working environment

High-stakes challenge

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Audience needs and environment

(in relation to high-stakes challenge)

Target audience/persona:

Goals and needs	Challenges and pain points
Opportunities	Threats

Content considerations

(in relation to audience needs and high-stakes challenge)

Scope:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Guiding Focus

Content strategy statement

Content strategy vision

Guiding principles

Rationale

Action Plan

Who

What

When

References and resources

Models for deciding

Feasible   Desirable

Viable
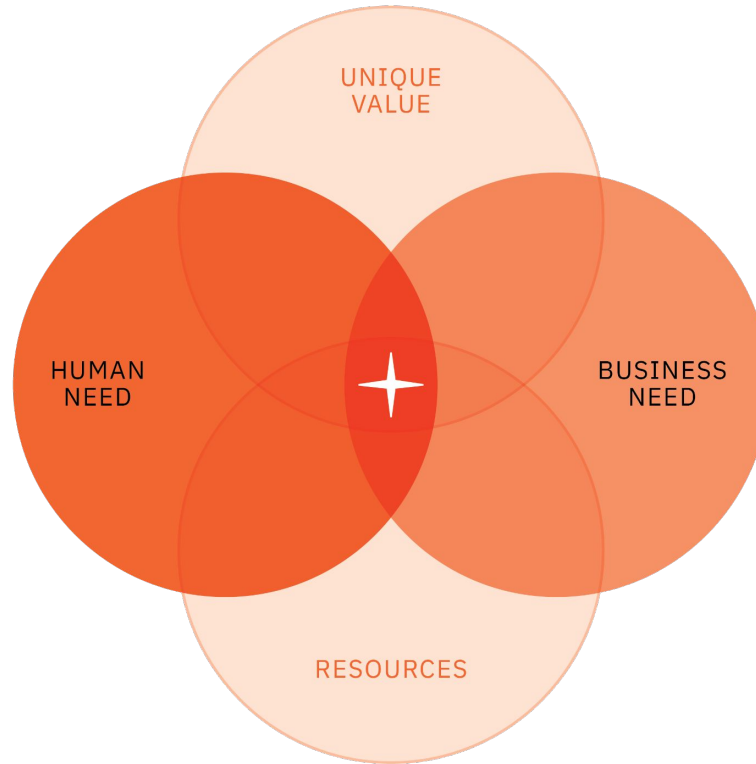
Enter the Northstar Framework

What it is

An outcome your
organisation has to achieve:

→ Strategic
→ Operational
→ Communications and
marketing
→ Compliance

How to find this out

→ Desk research
→ Internal workshops
→ Internal interviews

User need

What it is

AKA audience need, customer need.

Must be real!

How to find this out

All the tools in the UX and audience research toolkit.

Spoiler: people don't need your content!

What it is

The 'how' question:

→ Staff availability
→ Skills
→ Systems
→ Money

How to find this out

→ Desk research
→ Capability review

Unique value

What it is

What are you uniquely placed
to offer?

→ Authority
→ Exclusiveness
→ Innovation
→ Perspective
→ Excellence

How to find this out

→ Comparator analysis
→ Channel strategy

Case study: law enforcement agency

1. Priorities
2. Child exploitation
3. Criminal records check
4. Recruitment
5. About us

An analytical exercise

	Business value		User need		Resourcing		Unique value		Total
Child exploitation	5/5	One of the Commissioner's five priorities.	5/5	Remains a compelling community concern.	5/5	Because we a;ready have multiple online properties exist, we can leverage insights from those projects.	5/5	We have a unique role here.	20/20
Criminal records check	4/5	This is not in the Commissioner's top 5 priorities, however, it is the single most visited area of our site. This presents an opportunity to engage audiences who we wouldn't otherwise reach.	5/5	Extremely high search demand for this.	5/5	The amount of content needed on our site is minimal, and we have enough evidence to inform our work.	4/5	Some agencies will only accept a check from us. External services charge an extra fee (as they simply lodge the request with us. It is better for people to come directly to us in terms of cost and legitimacy	18/20
Recruitment	5/5	A key business driver for the new site.	5/5	Strong interest from users.	5/5	Substantial research already conducted.	5/5	We have a unique role here.	20/20
About us	5/5	Staff interviews consistently identified this as a pain point.	5/5	In interviews we consistently heard a desire to learn more about what we do.	5/5	The amount of content needed on our site is minimal, and we have enough evidence to inform our work.	5/5	We are the authority on our role!	20/20

Case study: Government site about Canberra

RESOURCED

USER NEED

BUSINESS NEED

UNIQUE VALUE

① ②
③ ④

⑤

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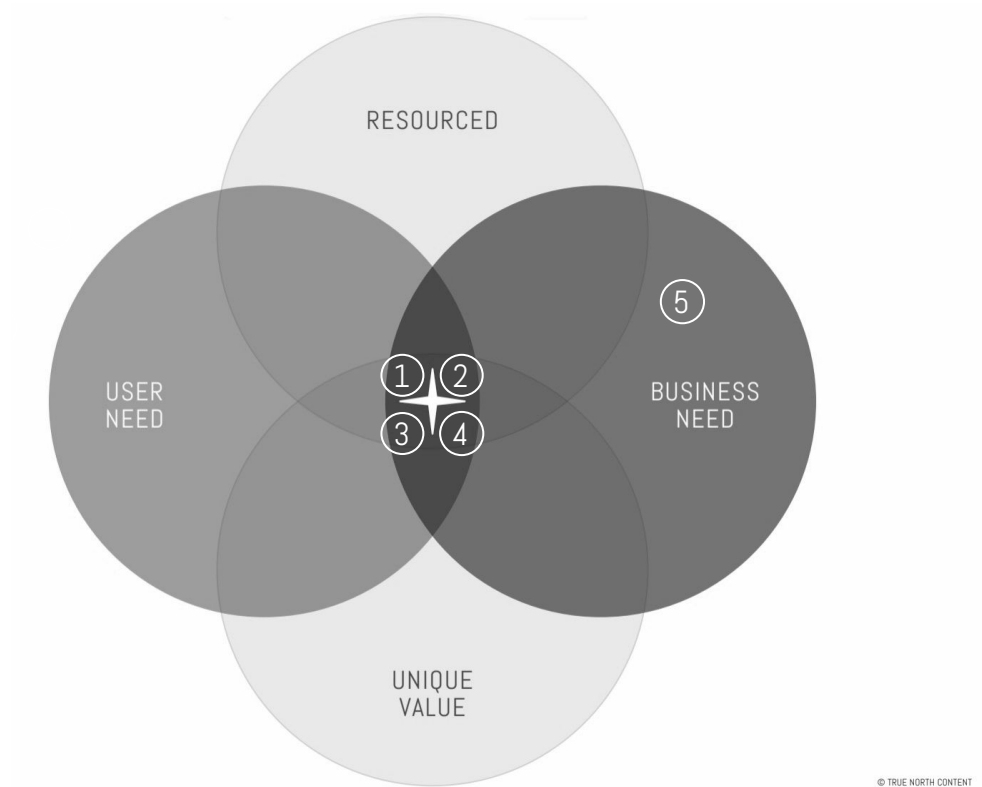
① Information on Canberra as a safe city to study

② Information on what ACT Government support is available to businesses based here.

③ Information on the ACT Government's skilled migration program

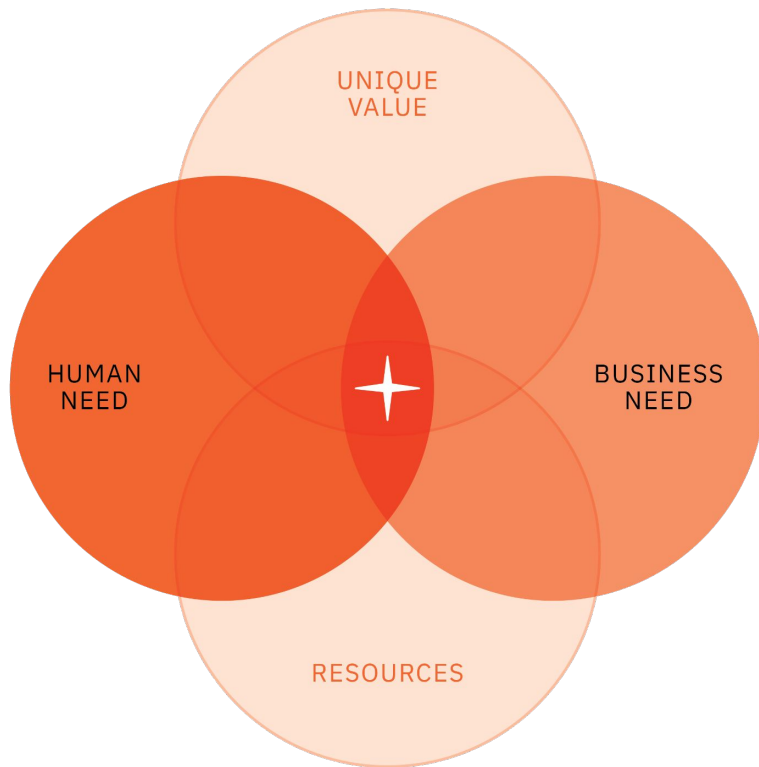④ Advice on how to find housing

⑤ Course finder software

Let's do one! Local council website

Information on how to pay a parking fine

News article with a detailed discussion of the council's general meeting

Article on fun things to do in winter

UNIQUE VALUE

HUMAN NEED

BUSINESS NEED

RESOURCES

Applications
1. Assessing what already exists
2. Prioritising inclusions for design scope
3. Triaging work in BAU

Process
The process is super flexible — it's more of a set of lenses than a rigid methodology.
But if I was using this in brainstorming with a client, for example I would:

1. Gather the evidence for each facet
2. Share that evidence with the client to provide some context and guardrails
3. Run a brainstorming session to generate ideas
4. Triage using the framework

Don't forget…

How might we: bridge the gap between strategic direction and tactical decisions?

Questions?

Thank you!

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