From Wardley Map to Backlog

My Background

Principal Consultant
- Agile Methodology
- Org. Design & Cultural Change

Agile Experience
- Certified LeSS Trainer
- Scrum Trainer

Software Development Experience
- 20+ years
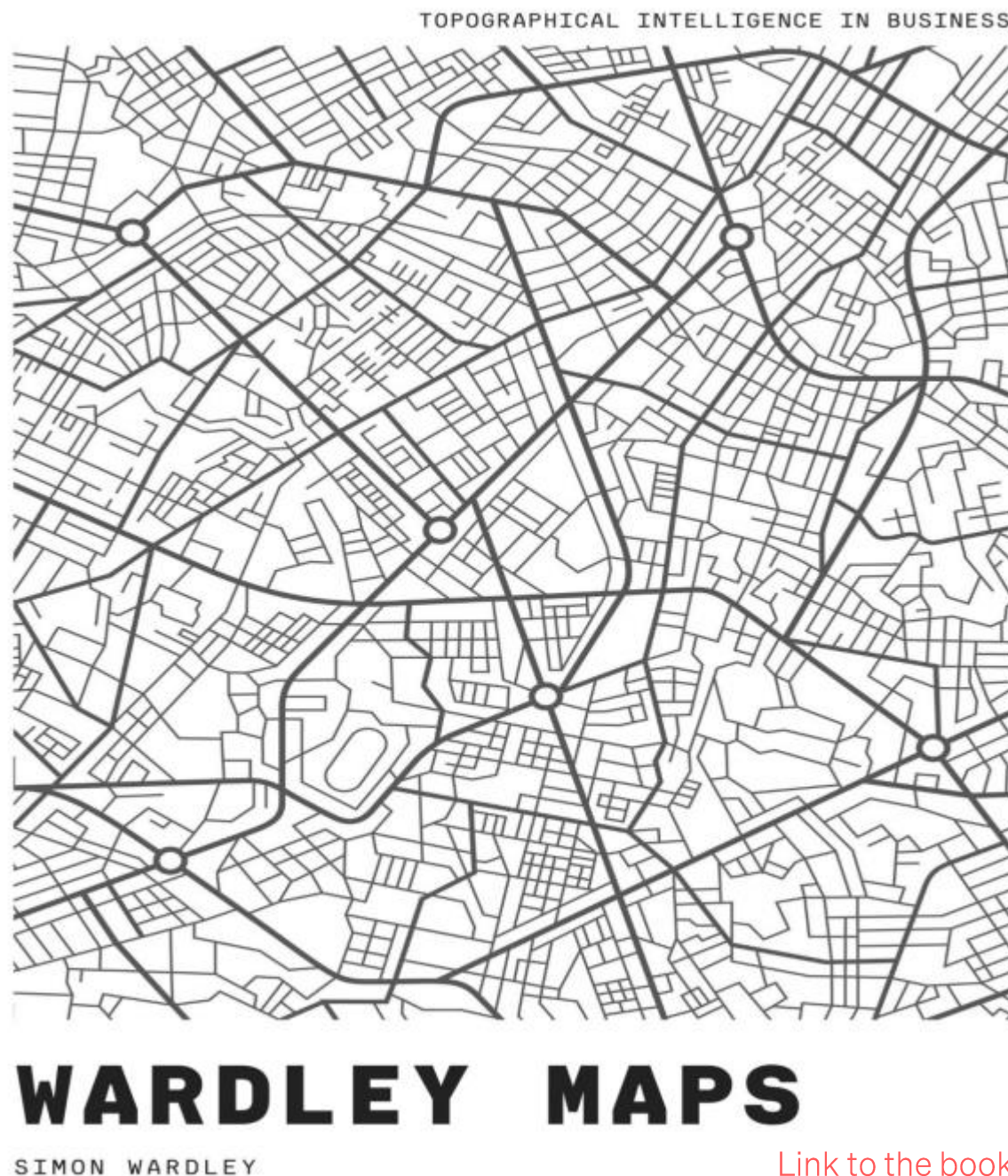- C++, Java, JavaScript, Python, …

Business Areas
- Automotive
- Insurance
- Retail and E-Commerce

michael.mai@valtech.com

Wardley Maps

TOPOGRAPHICAL INTELLIGENCE IN BUSINESS

WARDLEY MAPS

SIMON WARDLEY

Link to the book

- Product Thinking
- Product Development
- Strategic Thinking

- Projecting thoughts into the future
- Uncertainty by design
- Trying to accomplish business success

Perfect fit for
Agile Product Development

Situation On Display

context of the example in upcoming slides

**Simon**: We were an online photo service, a consultancy, a European CRM, an Identity web service, a fulfilment engine and an assortment of special projects around 3D printing and the use of mobiles phones as cameras. *I had no real way of determining which we should focus on* and hence the purpose was a compromise of doing everything.

Simon: When I had taken over the company a few years earlier, we were losing money hand over fist, we had to borrow significant sums to stay afloat because we were on our way out. In reality our purpose had been simply "to survive".

Simon: In the next few years we had turned this around, we had become highly profitable, we had paid back the loans and had a million or so in the bank and we were growing.

Don't Start With the End
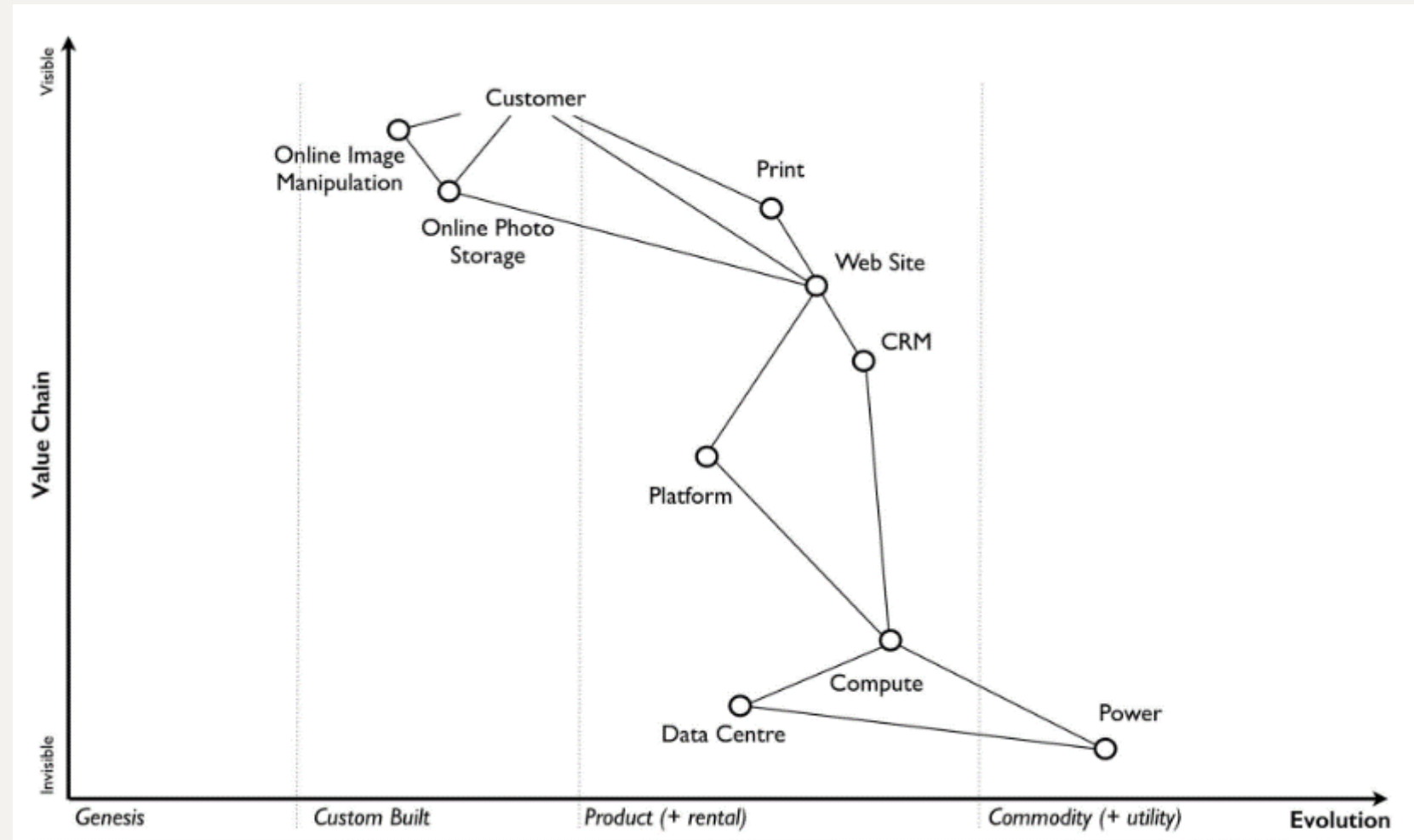
The map is powerful for orientation – it is essential – but **if you try to start from the end, you start from the worst position**.
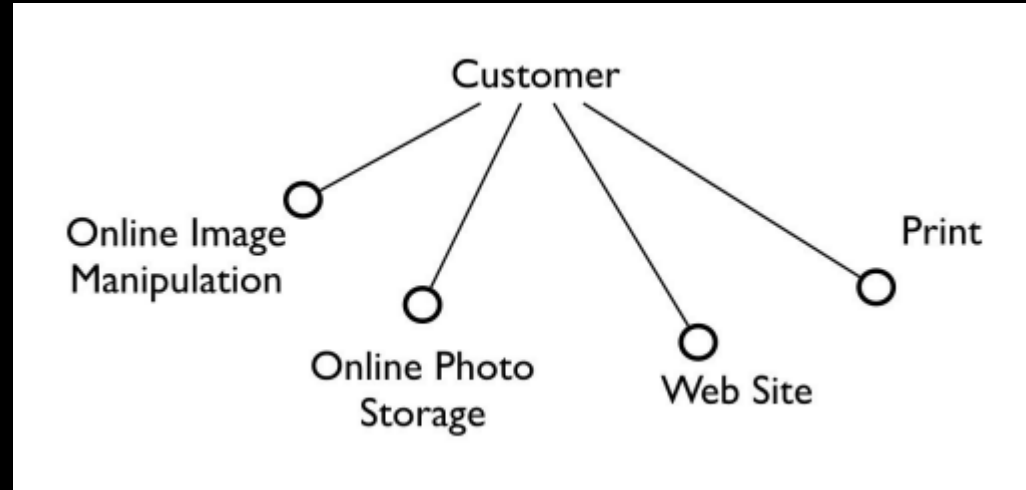
- If you start from the end, you implicitly assume perfect knowledge and no change.
- You limit yourself by inability to react and adjust.

Start With Needs

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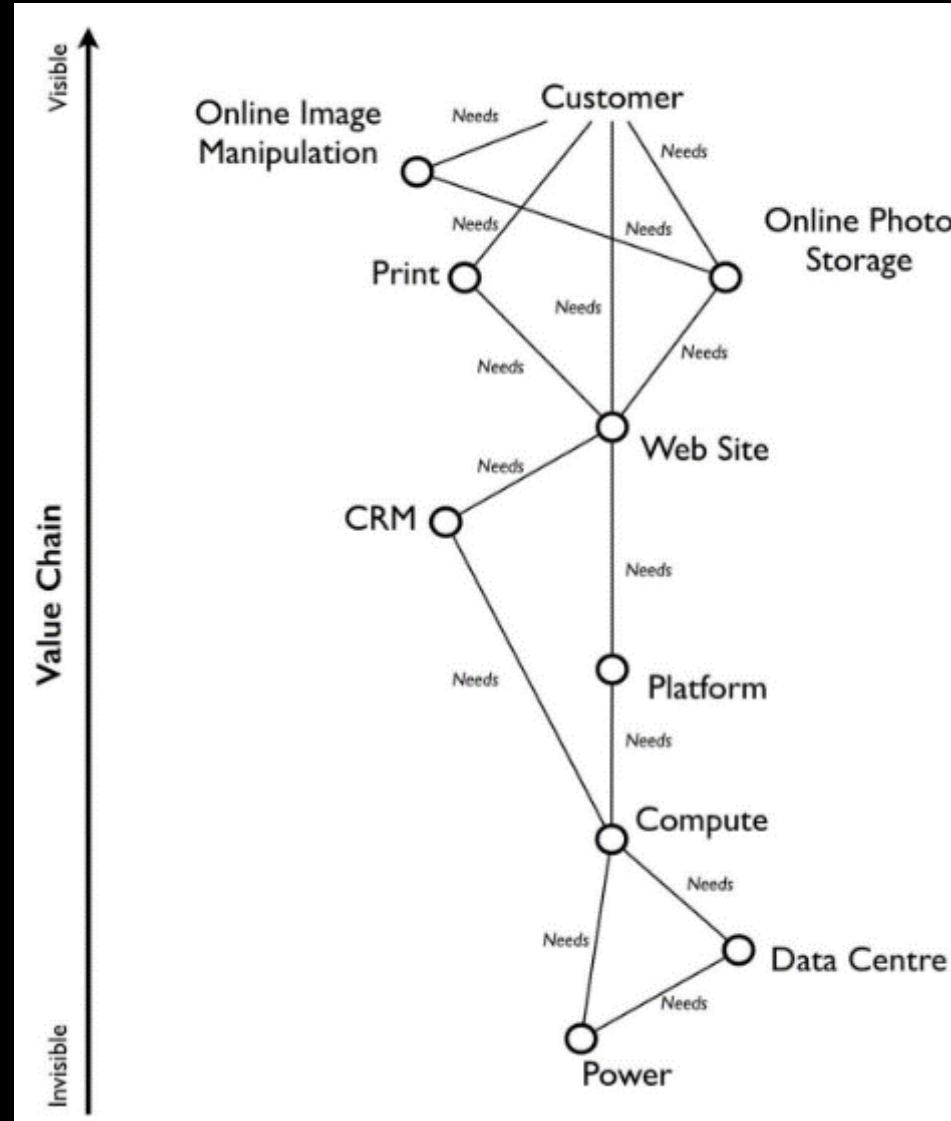# Step 1 "User Needs"

- Know your customer.

- Know your context.

- Notice:
  - **Follow the money!**
  - There is nothing internal.

Continue With Understanding Relations

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Step 2
"Value Chain"

- Understand and visualize what is driving value to your customer.

- No *noun* drives the flow of value.

- Only relations, collaborations, interactions, and reasons drive value.

- Notice:
    - **Focus on "needs".**
    - Ignoring timelines, deadlines, and release plans.

Initial Placing And Moving

- For this slide:
  - Ignore constrains, inertia barrier, barriers, ...
- Note
  - The more visible to the customer, the more on the left you are.

- **Gensis**: Needs research and experimentation.
- **Custom Built**: There is nothing, we need to build it.
- **Rental**: There is something.
- **Commodity**: There are many options.
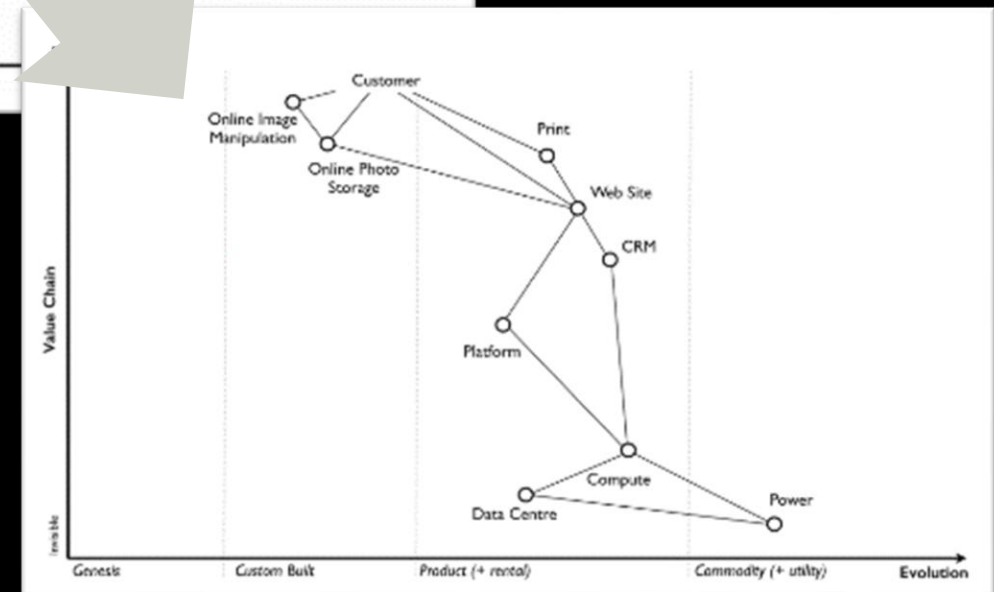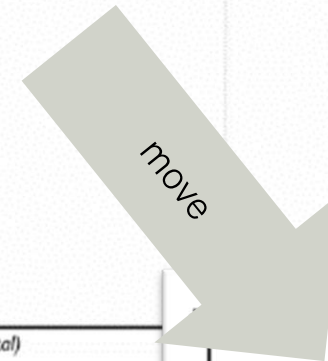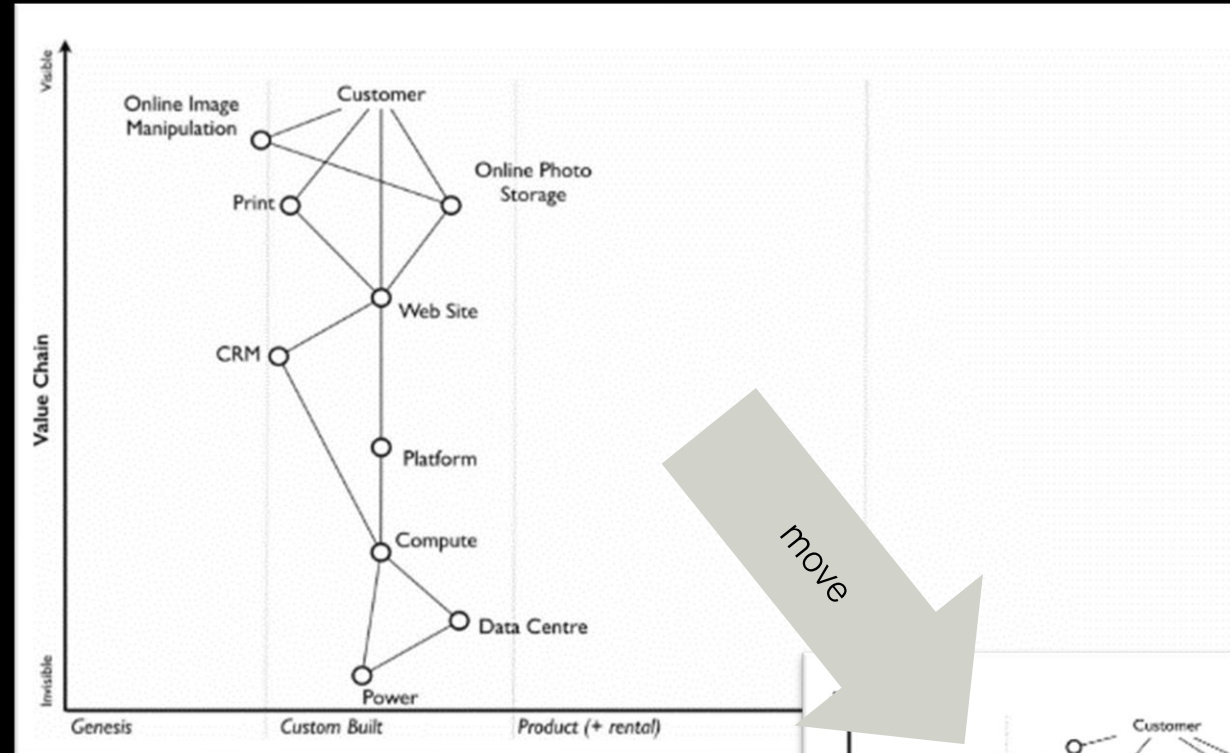
How does Agility fit?

merriam-webster →

Note:
- No User Story …
- No T-Shirt Sizes …
- No PI …
- …

The very core of "Agile":
- … is the ability to response to change.
- … is the ability to pursue beneficial product development.

Therefore:
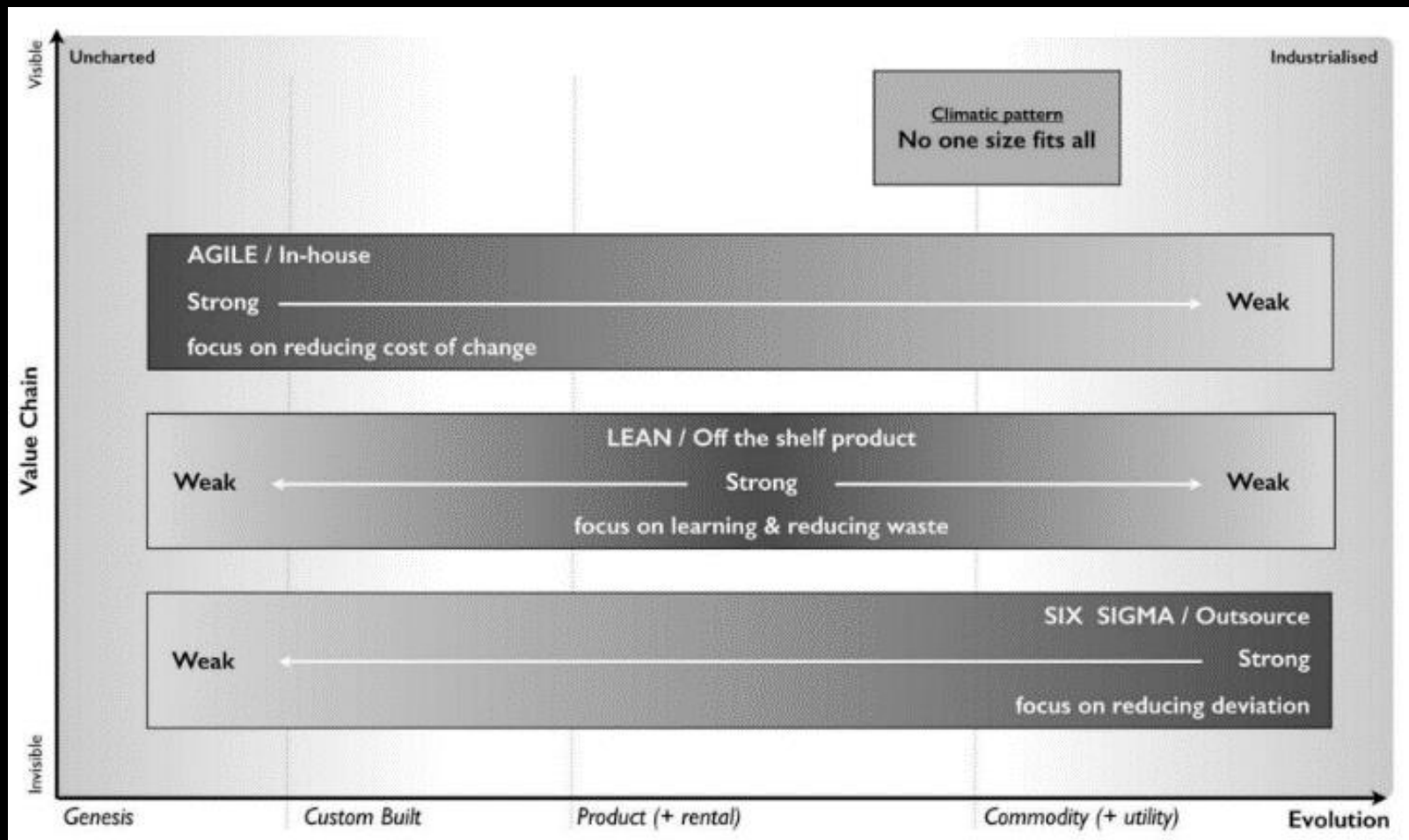- Perfect match for strategy product re-alignment.

Design principle of

Design principle of LeSS:
- Organizational agility (adaptiveness).
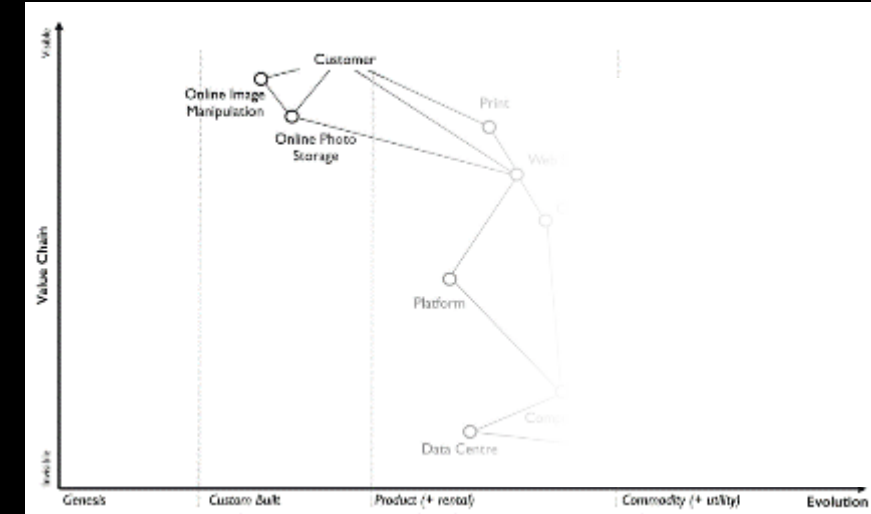- Maximining customer value delivery.

Wardley Maps
Call for Agility

"Genesis" and "Custom Built"

- Focus effort on the portions that matters and differentiate from competition.

- Start with step 1
    - Know what your customer needs.

- Followed by step 2
    - Understand which value is generated for the customer by the provided.
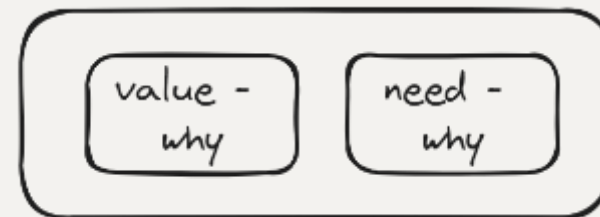

- Notice:
    - **We start the Product Backlog by Understanding**.
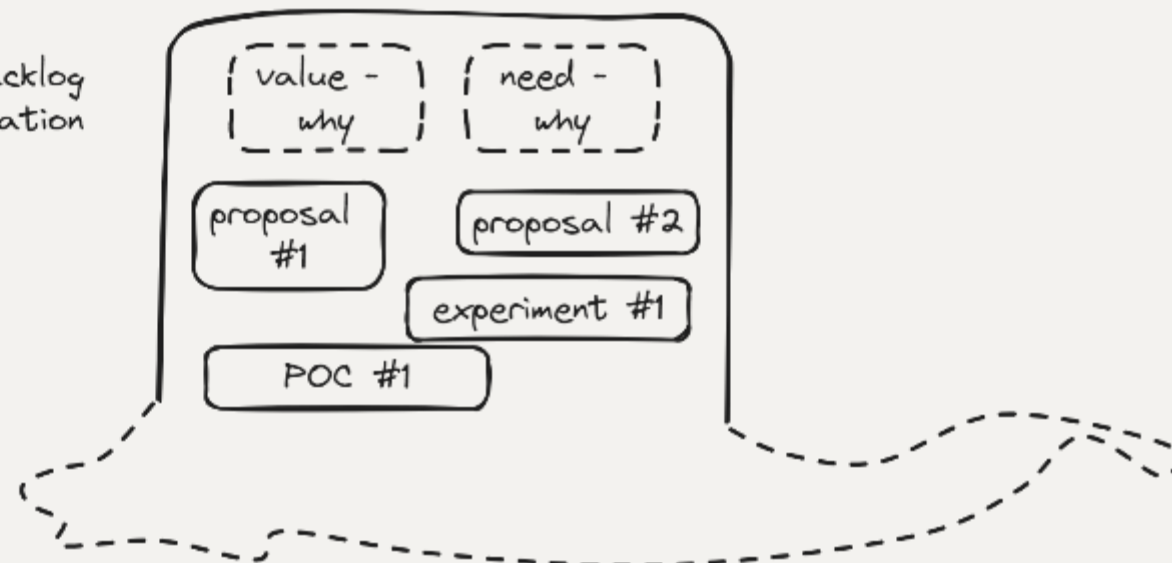   - We start the Backlog by **learning** the value proposition.

The Beginning: Product Backlog

Product Backlog
First Iteration

- The team learns "Why".

- The team learns how "Value" is generated for the customer.

- This is called: **Product Backlog Refinement**.

- There are no chicken in a refinement.

Product Backlog
"Next" Iteration

- This is closely related to the steps of Wardley Mapping.
- Connecting verification, learning, and implementation.

Keep in Mind

- In each Product Backlog Refinement:
    - Know your customer.
    - Know the why for the need.
    - Know the value.

- Product Backlog Item typically:
    - Is a problem statement to resolve.
    - Is a challenge to master.
    - Is an incremental value to deliver.
        - deliver as in "to the customer"; not PO, not PMO, not "it is here on my branch", …

- Naturally – you constantly verify your strategic decisions:
    - You explore the most "valuable" things first.
    - You deliver the most "valuable" things first.

- Notice:
    - The Product Backlog and Sprint Backlogs are **conceptionally different things**.

You are the CEO.

Where do you feel more comfortable making decisions?

- With A you have a better overview.
- With A you have less Items to priorities.

- Then why tend many organization tend to B?

A	B
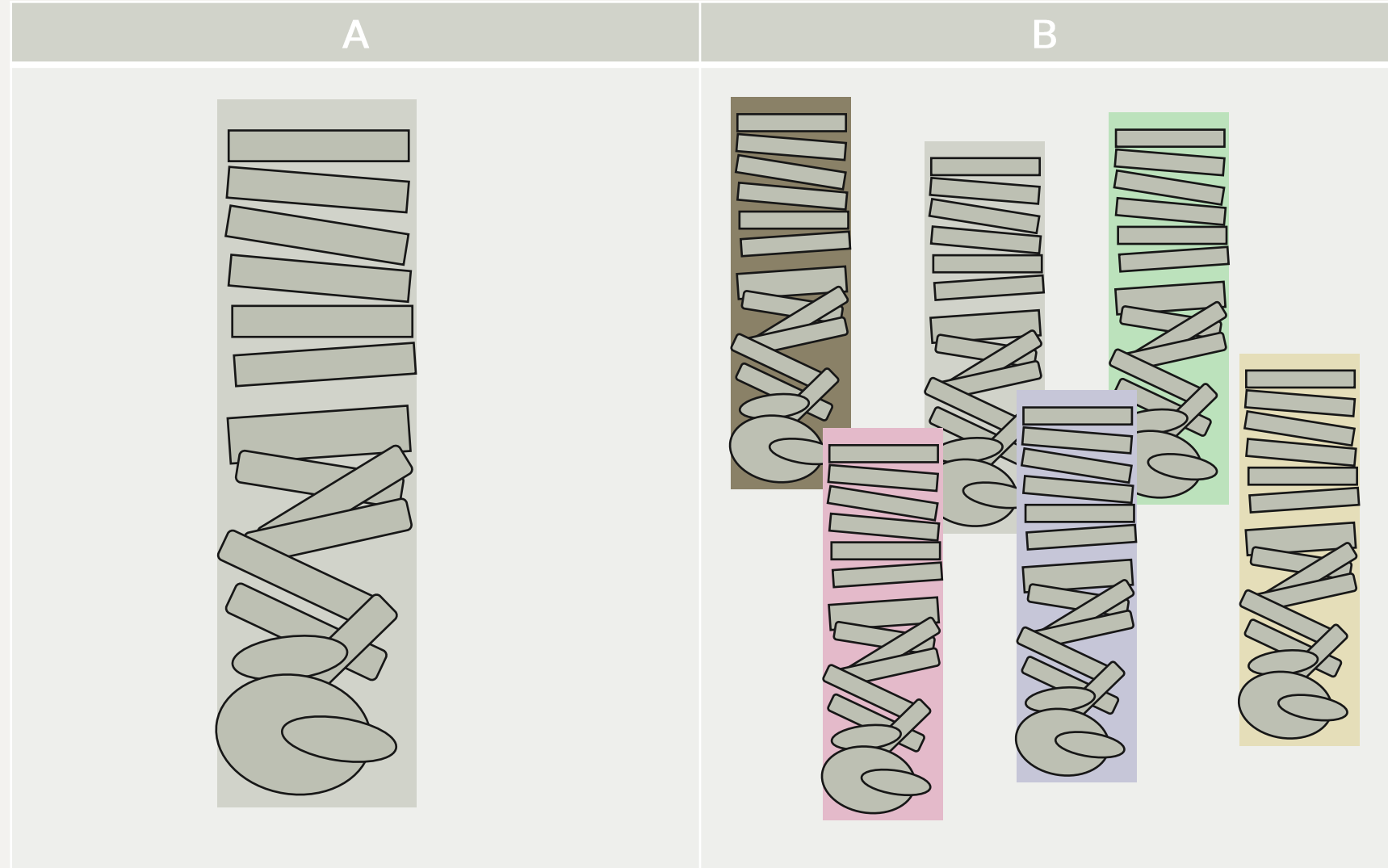
* Typical backlog(s): near future clear, further future more unclear.

Difference of Product Backlog and (team) Backlogs

Product Backlog	"Typical" team Backlog
Items focus on business value.	Items focus on team progress. ▪ especially if refined by solely for this team.
Items are understandable by all teams and customer.	Items are (accidently) detailed to be understandable for one team only. ▪ especially if refined by solely for this team.
Items are larger, more stable, and meaningful to non-tech people. ▪ More engaging for top-level stakeholders.	Items are smaller.
"Easy" to check if Item fits the strategy.	Hard to trace strategy to Item.

Merge of team Backlogs?
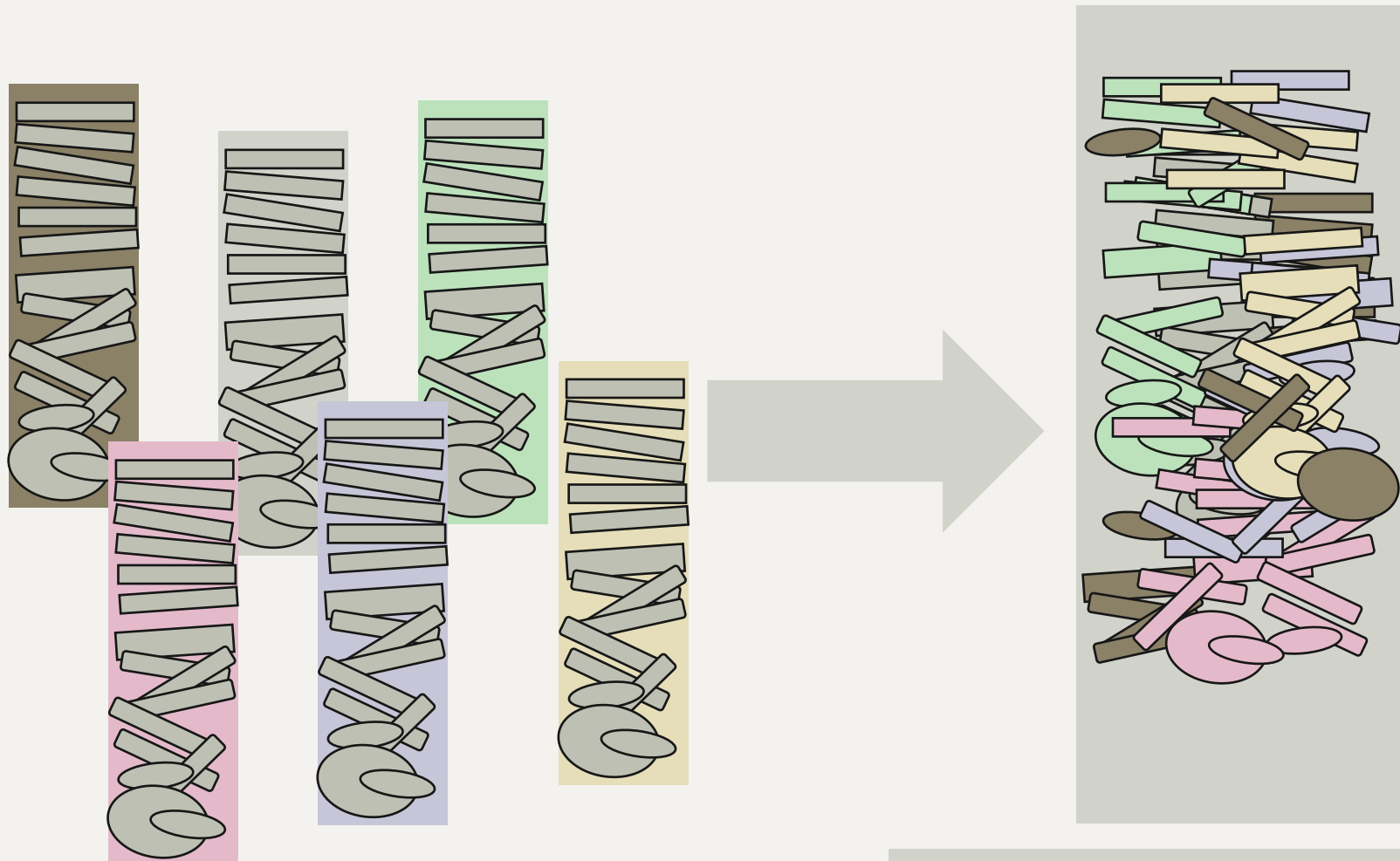
- The merge of multiple future-looking team Backlogs does not result in one Product Backlog.
- Thus, the Product Owner is severely hampered to make decisions.

Ability to Take a Turn

Mind:

- All predictions are inherently unsure.

- All forecasts are inherently unsure.

- All assumptions may change.

Therefore:

- Invest in your ability to change.
    - Adaptiveness of our organization.

- Invest in understanding, so you know when to turn.
    - Learning and value delivery.

- Keep your business strategy in updated.
    - Adjust your Wardley Mapping and Product Backlog as needed

- Keep your business case straight.
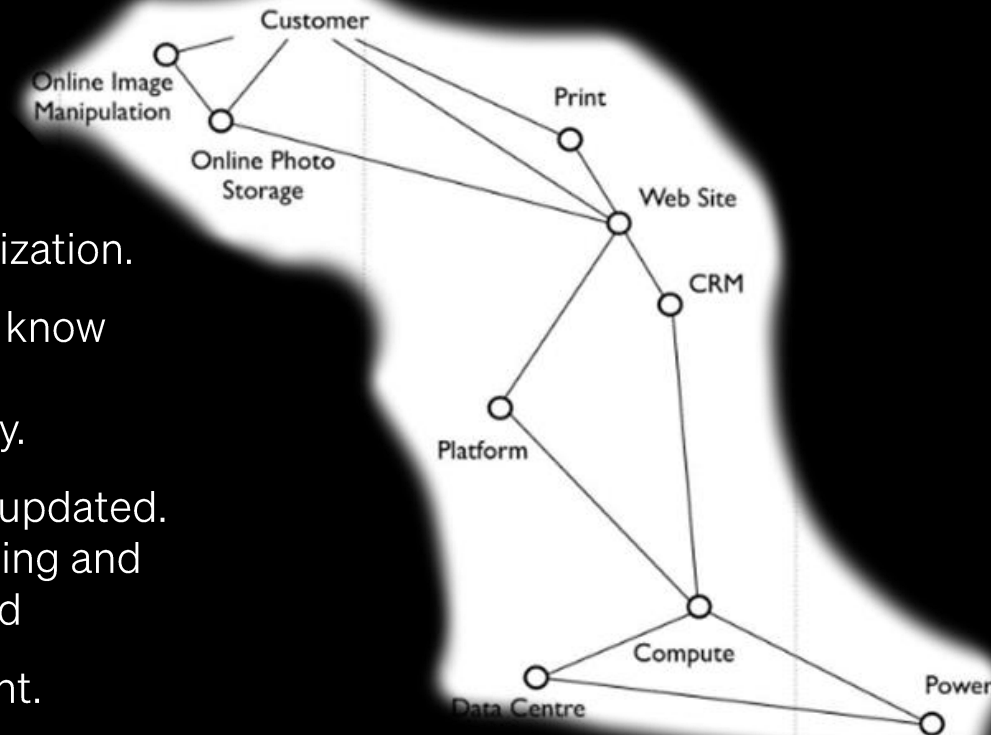
Mapping to Attitudes

The more visible to customer
→ more left
→ more agility is required
→ more pioneer attitude in teams
→ more learning
→ more need for adaptiveness in your organization
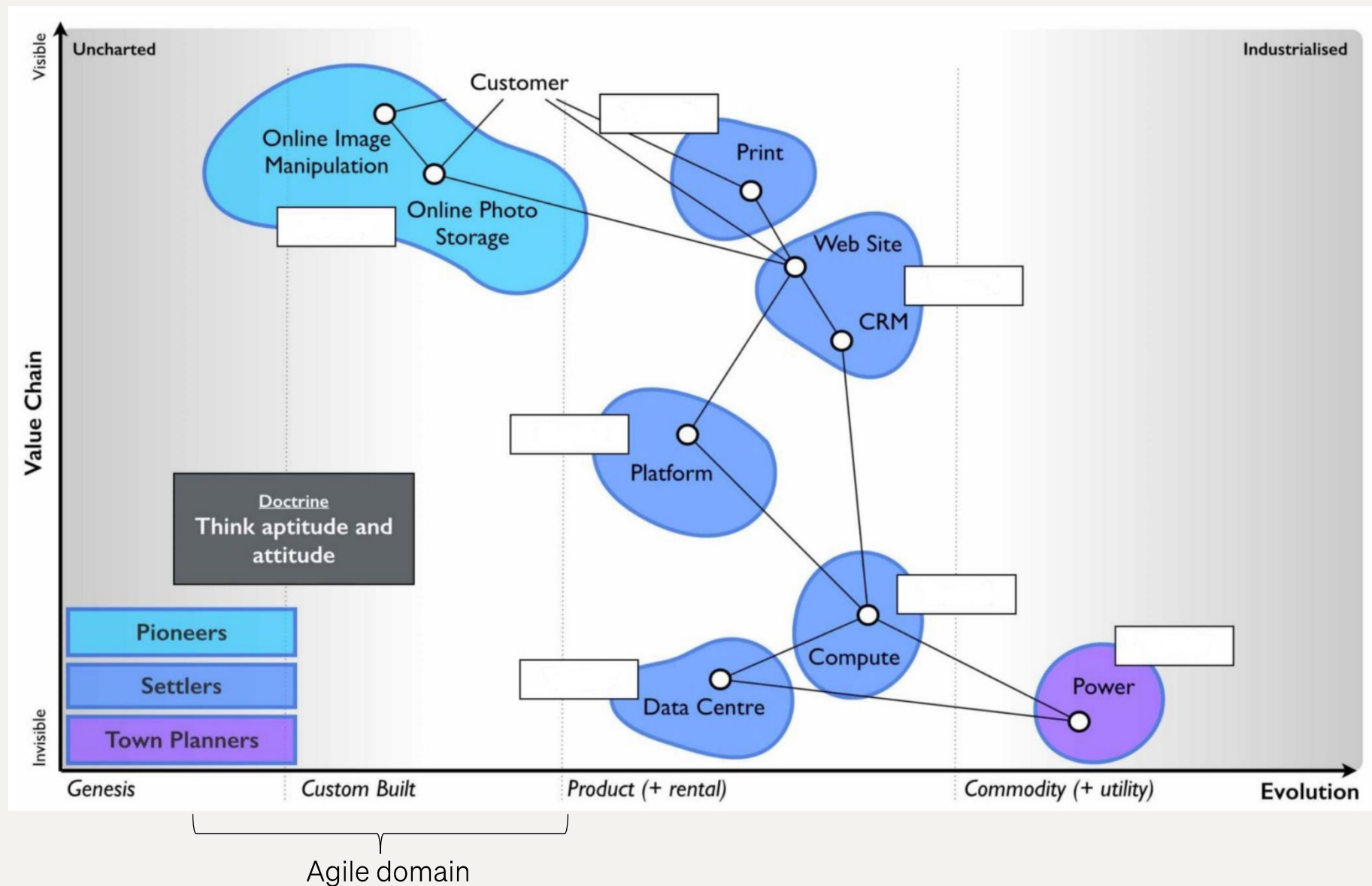
Conclusion

- Wardley Maps – by its focus on strategy – explore "value" first.

- Agile – by its focus on learning – explores problem space first (understanding), followed by delivery (learning from experiments).

- Exploring "is the delivery meeting the value" is second-nature for Wardley-Map practitioner.

- Summarizing all Sprint Backlogs into a single Backlog doesn't result in a Product Backlog.

- The benefits of Wardley Maps are transferred to Backlogs through one shared Product Backlog.

Thank you.