



How to create your digital strategy

An executive guide and toolkit

Golden Marzipan's digital strategy development guide consists of four key steps, as well as a collection of tools and templates. Because we've built this guide at the coal face, we know it provides organisations proven guidance on the development and structure of their digital strategy.



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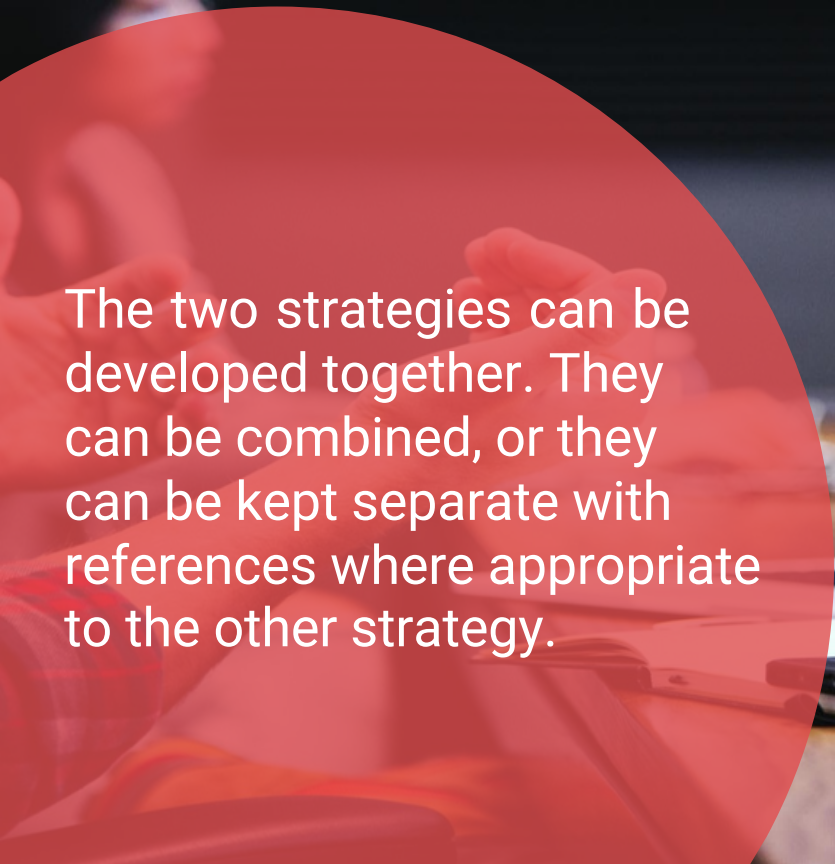
What is a digital strategy?

A digital strategy or plan is the story of an organisation's vision for engaging with digital solutions and technologies. It articulates the opportunities and challenges related to digital activities, governance, management arrangements and risk management issues. It lays out a plan of action to maximise the business benefits of digital initiatives for the organisation.

How does a digital strategy differ from an ICT strategy?

An Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy generally addresses the issues associated with identifying, providing and maintaining the technological infrastructure and applications that enable an organisation to fulfil its vision and goals.

Where an ICT strategy sets out the technical infrastructure (the pipes and plumbing) that underpins an organisation's use of digital solutions and channels, a digital strategy states what is to be channelled through the pipes and plumbing, how that is to be managed and why.



The two strategies can be developed together. They can be combined, or they can be kept separate with references where appropriate to the other strategy.

Golden Marzipan's digital strategy guide and toolkit

Our digital strategy toolkit provides organisations with guidance on the development and format of their digital strategies.

The digital strategy toolkit covers four steps, supported by a set of templates and tools.



Step 1 Define your digital vision



Step 2 Assess your level of ICT maturity



Step 3 Prioritise your digital initiatives and projects



Step 4 Develop your digital strategy

Step 1- define your digital vision

The well-respected Harvard Business Review (HBR) publication on “Leading Digital” suggests ensuring your vision focuses on the organisation, not on the technology. It argues, “technology can remove obstacles and extend your capabilities, but it is not an end in and of itself”. It argues that you need to focus on how you can enhance the experience of your customers, streamline your operations, or transform your business models.

In other words, your digital vision should describe the digital vision you hope to achieve. In the view of Golden Marzipan, a digital vision should also be based on a deep understanding of customers and how emerging technologies enable us to solve problems. With that said, the vision itself should be straightforward, understandable, and unique to the organisation.

For example, we helped Southdown with its strategy, roadmap, and business case – all were approved by the board. But what really made a difference was when the leadership team embraced benefits management. Have a look at this very short video from CEO Neil Blanchard and his team at Southdown crafting their digital vision to engage colleagues and customers.



Step 2 - ICT governance maturity assessment tool

ICT governance is an emerging topic and is becoming more important because of the fusion between business and ICT. ICT is no longer just a matter of service provision. This ICT governance assessment tool enables organisations to self-assess their level of ICT maturity – call it a readiness check. The objective is to gain a picture of your organisation’s current level of ICT maturity and identify what you’re doing well and where improvements can be made.



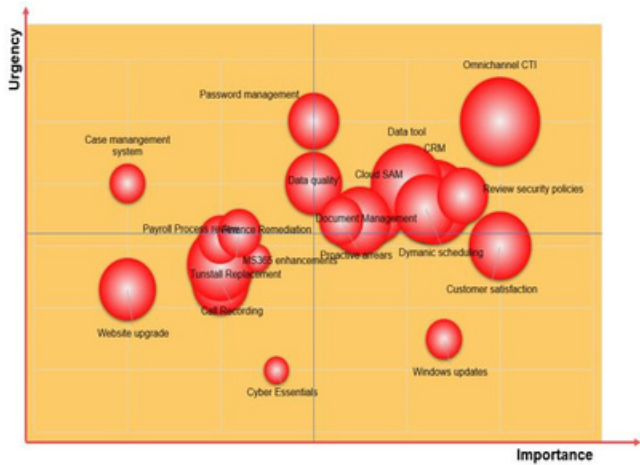
Golden Marzipan (in partnership with 3C Consultants) has created a maturity framework and assessment tool. There is no pass or fail to the standards. We think a more objective test is to assess the “maturity” of your ICT governance.

Over 25 housing associations have now completed the assessment and those that have involved senior leaders have gained the most benefit from the tool. We are already able to anticipate what some of the issues may be but we will provide benchmarked results.



Step 3 – Prioritise your digital initiatives

The digital initiatives prioritisation tool aims to reduce the risk of undertaking digital projects that are not likely to succeed. This could be because they are too difficult to undertake or fail to have real benefits to customers of the organisation - or organisations already have a significant number of initiatives.



This tool helps you to prioritise the roll-out of any number of potential digital projects by asking you to consider how each one rates against four key categories of criteria: mandatory criteria, benefits, ease of execution, and risk. The tool is flexible: it is in spreadsheet format, allowing you to change or move criteria, add new ones, delete criteria, or change the weighting.

Step 4 -Develop your digital strategy

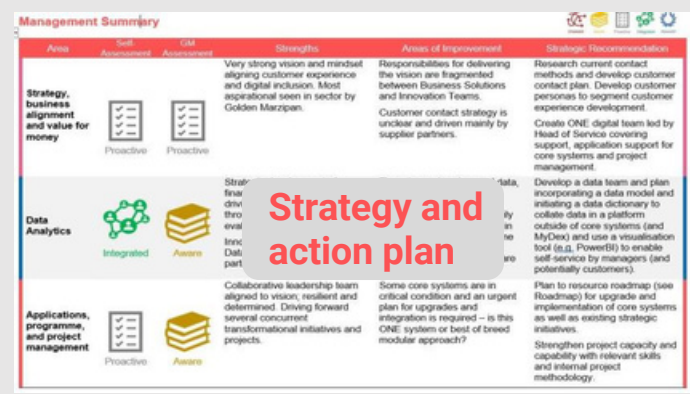
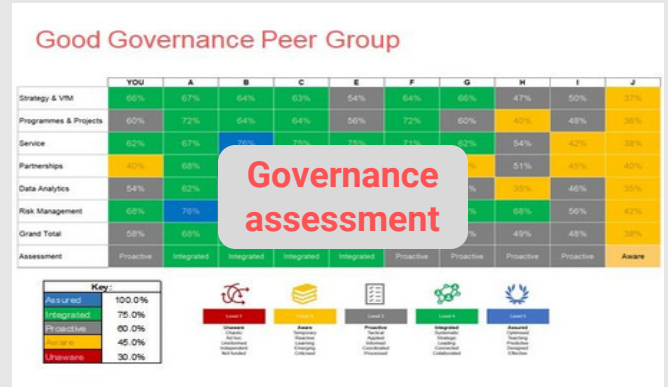
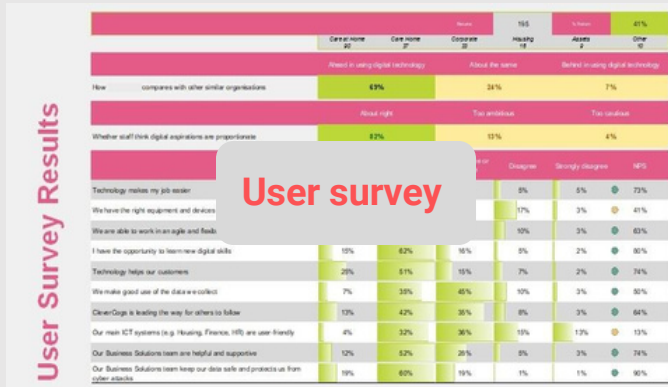
Your strategy should be completed by a team of people in the organisation, rather than one person. The team should have experience in customer needs, management, business operations, digital channels and solutions, design, marketing and communications, and supporting technologies and infrastructure. It should ideally answer the following questions: why, what, how?

- **Why** –this is the rationale for the digital strategy –alignment with the organisation’s own vision and goals. It should also include a note as to why digital transformation is important.
- **What** –identify the key characteristics of the organisation’s digital strategy and provide a brief explanation of each. These are the key pillars and principles that provide the criteria by which to assess the merit and direction of digital channels and service delivery and any digital initiatives and solutions. There should be an emphasis on the customer and transformation of the business, not a mere transition of the status quo to digital channels.
- **How** – identify the key success factors and actions that must be addressed to fulfil the vision, comply with the guiding principles, and meet the benefits and the associated KPIs. These will be high-level and so the detail, action plans, and schedule need to be identified and addressed separately.

Benefits – these are the desired outcomes for customers and the organisation expressed in relative terms - better, more, less, shorter, increased, etc. These can become the KPIs, so where feasible set targets of timeframe and results – e.g., in two years: 15% fewer calls to our contact centre and 20% increase in online transactions.

Golden Marzipan digital strategy resources

We have several resource tools and templates that our clients use to help them develop and deploy their digital strategy. Please get in touch if you'd like a copy of our project management templates below.



Golden Marzipan digital strategy project management templates

Now you have a strategy and a plan, you will next need to effectively project manage the implementation. Our project management templates enable you both to manage and provide governance to implement your digital strategy. They are designed to help you map out a detailed implementation plan for your digital strategy. The plan encourages you to identify detailed actions and goals related to developing, implementing, and reviewing progress on the rollout of your digital strategy over some time.

How we work

Critical friend

Our clients see us as critical friends. They tell us that we create a safe space for clients to explore options and develop their own capacity for transformation without fear of being judged or failing. Neil Blanchard, CEO Southdown described it as “they make you feel not stupid.” Our clients tell us they value our honesty. One of our clients said, “They are not a management consultancy, they are a critical friend business.”

Part of the team

We are seen and feel like part of the team rather than an external consultant. “They care about us as an organisation and our success.” Clients highlight that Golden Marzipan’s approach is very inclusive and engaging: “Golden Marzipan takes people on a journey, engaging them and leave no one behind.”



[Southdown's Digital Vision](#)



[ICT Governance Assessment](#)



[Agile Sprint Methodology](#)



[ICT Team of the Future](#)

Confidence builders

Firstly, our clients see us as capacity builders. They feel that Golden Marzipan has helped develop skills within the organisation and strengthened teams, giving them more confidence to tackle other issues, creating a lasting legacy in the organisation, rather than a ‘fix and done’ approach. Clients also tell us from a personal perspective of feeling more confident or empowered from what they’ve learned and the fact that they do feel they have a trusted source to turn to.

Tailored response

Our clients tell us that Golden Marzipan’s approach feels tailored and not ‘one-size-fits-all’. One client described it as “they understood our uniqueness” and another reported that this approach is what set Golden Marzipan apart from other providers: “We chose them because of personality that they were able to tailor their response.”

“They're not a management consultancy, they are a critical friend business”

Fiona Astor
Transformation Director
Magenta Living

At Golden Marzipan, we're a little different. We are a professional change consultancy whose mission is to assist small and medium Housing Associations to establish sustainable innovative digital cultures that enhances the customer experience. Our personalised artisan approach, along with our extensive sector knowledge, has already made an impact on our clients.

We are the Golden Marzipan team:

- Peter Lunio
- Steve Dungworth
- Andrew Giles
- Louise Cope
- Michelle Millar
- Richard Shenton
- Lynne Mills
- Katie Giles
- Katy Dungworth
- James Parkin
- Rebecca Stockdale



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Take the next step

WANT TO DO IT YOURSELF?

Start with our free executive guide to delivering the digital dividend in social housing.



LACK TIME AND NEED PROFESSIONAL ADVICE?

We have a team of experts who can assist you in designing and delivering your strategy.

REQUEST A FREE CONSULTATION

Email peter@goldenmarzipan.co.uk

Help us make this guide even better

We want to hear from you. If you have any suggestions to improve this resource, please email peter@goldenmarzipan.co.uk. Thank you!