

Decision Architecture Category Tree - Facilitators Guide

Overview

One of the first tasks in the Decision Architecture methodology is to understand the scope of the various analytics that are performed. A Category Tree is a grouping of like questions and decisions that are fit into a business context. It is a hierarchical structure that provides the subjects or topics that the manager will want to analyze codified into the Inform > Diagnose > Action > Measure framework. To determine the groupings and structure for the Category Tree, we review existing reports, conduct interviews, or facilitate workshops.

In this guide, we are assuming that you will compose the Category Tree through a facilitated session. This approach will leverage brainstorming and storyboarding techniques to drive through a group of analytics composed into the following phases:

- Written Brainstorming
- Resolve Duplicate Ideas / Analytics
- Develop Logical Groupings and place into a Category
- Resolve Discrepancies
- Place each Category into one of the four components of the analytical cycle
 - Inform
 - Diagnose
 - Action
 - Measure

Approach

1. Conduct Brainstorming
 - a. Review the rules of Brainstorming with the group. These include
 - i. All ideas are good ideas
 - ii. Have Fun
 - iii. Build on each other's ideas
 - iv. No criticism
 - b. Ask the group, 'What are the types of analytics this business area performs today or would like to perform in the future?'
 - c. Establish a time limit for the generation of ideas portion of the agenda depending on the length of the session. Make sure there is a 5min and 2min warning to the group so they know when to start to wind down the idea generation.
 - d. Ask the group to generate their ideas silently on a large post-it note. Each idea should go on a separate post it notes. Have them write their initials on the post-it notes so you know whom generated what idea.
 - e. Once the time has passed, have the individuals put their post-it up on the wall.
 - f. While the individual is posting the notes, have them clarify the idea or type of analytics.

2. Resolve Duplicate Ideas / Analytics
 - a. As the group is posting their idea, ask them to group similar ideas, one on top of each other.
3. Develop Logical Groupings and place into a Category
 - a. Once the group has resolved the duplicate ideas, ask them to group them in like Categories.
 - b. Once a Category has been developed, ask the group to name the category.
4. Resolve Discrepancies
 - a. Ask the group to resolve ideas or analytics types that could fall in one or more Categories.
5. Place each Category into one of the four components of the analytical cycle
 - a. Inform
 - b. Diagnose
 - c. Action
 - d. Measure

Supporting Tools & Techniques

- Large Post-it notes
- Decision Architecture Methodology
- Decision Analysis Technique
- Parking Lot
- Issue / Risks Management

Keys for Success

- The more ideas generated by the group the better
- Effectively manage the brainstorming phases, don't leave this phase prematurely
- Manage the grouping process to achieve a middle ground in terms of type of category, not too small or too big of a bucket
- Use active listening skills
- Let the group be the subject matter expert, your goal is to facilitate the process
- Use silence effectively, it will be your strongest technique

Examples

We are going to help the Edison Car Company develop their Category Tree. There are five steps to conducting the session:

1. Brainstorming:

Below is the list of analytics the team developed during the brainstorming exercise:

- Product Sales

- East Region Sales
- Forecasted Sales
- North Region Sales
- West Region Sales
- South Region Sales
- Budgeted Sales
- Atlanta Sales
- Product Velocity
- Stocking Levels
- Manufacturing Analytics
- Shipping Analytics
- Truck Sales
- Sedan Sales
- Marketing Spend Analytics
- Marketing Effectiveness Analytics
- Revenue Mix
- Sport Car Sales
- Trend Analytics
- Sales Quote Analytics
- Commissions Analytics

2. Resolve Duplicate Ideas / Analytics

Based on the analytics generated, the group remove the following duplicates and reordered the list as follows:

- Product Sales
 - ~~Truck Sales~~
 - ~~Sedan Sales~~
 - ~~Sport Car Sales~~
- Forecasted Sales
- East Region Sales
 - ~~Atlanta Sales~~
- North Region Sales
- West Region Sales
- South Region Sales
- Budgeted Sales
- Product Velocity
- Stocking Levels
- Manufacturing Analytics
- Shipping Analytics
- Marketing Spend Analytics
- Marketing Effectiveness Analytics

- Revenue Mix
- Trend Analytics
- Sales Quote Analytics
- Commissions Analytics

3. Develop Logical Groupings and place into a Category

The group then logically grouped the analytics into several categories”

- Performance Analytics Category
 - Product Sales
 - Budgeted Sales
- Trend Category
 - Forecasted Sales
 - Trend Analytics
- Geography Analytics Category
 - East Region Sales
 - North Region Sales
 - West Region Sales
 - South Region Sales
- Marketing Analytics Category
 - Marketing Spend Analytics
 - Marketing Effectiveness Analytics
- Sales Person Productivity Analytics Category
 - Sales Quote Analytics
 - Commissions Analytics
- Manufacturing Analytics Category
 - Manufacturing Analytics
 - Shipping Analytics
- Product Velocity
- Stocking Levels
- Revenue Mix

4. Resolve Discrepancies

None of the Categories seem to be in conflict with each other. There are three remaining analytics that we will need to resolve for, Product Velocity, Stocking Levels, and Revenue Mix. We are going to create a Diagnostic for each of these areas.

5. Place each Category into one of the four components of the analytical cycle

Based on the different categories, we will ask the team to group them into one of the four components of the analytical cycle:

1. Inform
 - a. Performance Analytics Category
 - b. Trend Category
 - c. Geography Analytics Category
 - d. Marketing Analytics Category
 - e. Sales Person Productivity Analytics Category
 - f. Manufacturing Analytics Category
2. Diagnose
 - a. Product Velocity Diagnostics
 - b. Stocking Levels Diagnostics
 - c. Revenue Mix Diagnostics
3. Action
 - a. None at this time
4. Measure
 - a. None at this time