

MILESTONE MAPPING

TOOLKIT

by Celena Aponte, Saya Iwasaki and Kelly Kronmiller

Dedication

We dedicate this toolkit to the dreamers, problem solvers, doers, risk-takers, coffee-makers and multi-taskers. Those willing to sacrifice sleep, sanity and savings to grow an idea. You know who you are. We admire you.

By Celena Aponte, Saya Iwasaki and Kelly Kronmiller

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Getting Started

Introduction	4
Tips to Get Started	6

Milestone Mapping Toolkit

1 Understand Yourself	Exercise 1.1: Envision Your Work	8
	Exercise 1.2: Align Your Values to Your Work Vision	9
	Exercise 1.3: Ground in Your Current Work	10
	Exercise 1.4: Align Your Strengths with Your Work	11
	Exercise 1.5: Write Your Vision Statement	12
	Exercise 1.6: Define Your Destination	13
2 Build a Plan	Exercise 2.1: Bridge Your Vision to Your Goal	14
	Exercise 2.2: Set Your Milestone	15
	Exercise 2.3: Plan Your Milestone	16
	Exercise 2.4: Build Skills	17
	Exercise 2.5: Build Resources	18
3 Stay Accountable	Exercise 3.1: Milestone Calendar, Month 1	19
	Exercise 3.2: Milestone Calendar, Month 2	20
	Exercise 3.3: Milestone Calendar, Month 3	21
	Exercise 3.4: Reflect and Reset	22
4 Move to Action	The End of the Beginning	23

Facilitator's Guide

	Introduction for Facilitators	G1
1 Understand Yourself	Facilitator's Guide for Exercises 1.1 - 1.6	G2
2 Build a Plan	Facilitator's Guide for Exercises 2.1 - 2.5	G7
3 Stay Accountable	Facilitator's Guide for Exercises 3.1 - 3.4	G13

Dear Risk-Takers and Dreamers:

I am privileged to work with incredibly talented entrepreneurs at the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center.

Since opening our doors in 2015, the Center has witnessed how challenging it is for founders to gain focus and clarity when they're consumed by day-to-day pressures that only increase in number and magnitude each day. Yet, it's critical entrepreneurs align their business goals with their personal definitions of success to unlock maximum impact and value for themselves as leaders, and for their companies. Without mission alignment as a compass, your ability to prioritize, make decisions and drive your business forward is impaired. If you can't define measurable impact to you and your company, you're likely to end up spinning in circles -- which rarely ends well.

That's what we saw happening time and again to some of the most talented entrepreneurs we work with at the Center. So, we got curious. What might help ground these entrepreneurs? How can we help them gain clarity and focus to plan strategically while building endurance for the marathon they're running?

That's why we leveraged collective intelligence from over 300+ programs, research and community leaders to create a set of interactive exercises that help you align your personal and business goals. And then you can build an action plan based on your highest vision of success.

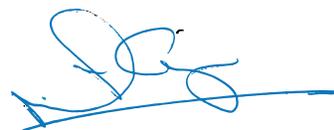
Since then, this toolkit has been developed, tested and refined along with the entrepreneurs we serve at the Center.

Here's why this toolkit matters. At the beginning, you're your company's biggest and most important asset. And this enterprise that you're building must speak to what drives you in a measurable way. After all, when building a business, who you are as a founder and what motivates you to do the impossible (despite the odds) is the only constant in a sea of complete unknowns.

At the Center, our mission is to deliver world-class resources and mentoring to enable every entrepreneur across the globe to realize their maximum potential. That includes creating toolkits, like this, that help accelerate talented founders forward in their journey of building great companies.

We invite you to share this toolkit with colleagues, friends, family and fellow risk-takers. Let us know what you think as we continue to evolve our resources. And most importantly, keep on dreaming and improving our lives, communities and world!

In admiration,



Nicola Corzine
Executive Director

Welcome to Milestone Mapping!

What is a Milestone?

A Milestone is your next important business goal that can be achieved in 12 weeks. If this goal is met, it should have an important positive effect on your business.

Milestone /'mīl'stōn/
noun

- (1) An important goal you've set for your business that takes time, tenacity, and more than a little creative thinking to attain.
- (2) An achievement that signals your business is on its way to the next stage of growth (and that deserves celebration).

This toolkit covers four areas that will help you set goals and map to your vision.



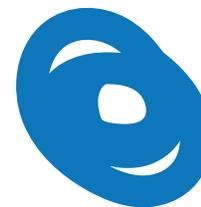
(1) Understand Yourself

You are your biggest asset; clarify how your personal strengths and dreams align to your business objectives.



(2) Build a Plan

Prioritize business goals, assess skills needed and develop a plan to close gaps and achieve your milestone.



(3) Stay Accountable

Define actions that grow resources, build networks and set benchmarks for success to track progress.



(4) Move to Action

Track your progress and measure action. It's time to start again! Get out there and continue your work.

Tips to Get Started:

Welcome to Milestone Mapping!

Entrepreneurs, coaches, facilitators: we've created a toolkit and a Facilitator's Guide for you (refer to the Facilitator's Guide for details). Exercise by exercise, we've included tips, extra tools to create dialogue and context for what's happening in the process.

We recommend working with someone else or a group of people. If you're working through this toolkit alone, we've indicated some spots where you might want to reach out to a peer, coach or mentor.

For Entrepreneurs:

Congrats, we know you're being pulled in a million directions and taking time out of your busy day is hard to do. Doing this work is one of the most critical investments you can make for your business.

We recommend you dedicate 5 hours of uninterrupted time to complete the full set of exercises, and allow yourself short breaks to stretch in between. If you are short on time, this can be done in two parts. We'd allow 3 hours to do Sections 1 and 2. The next day, you can tackle Section 3 with 2 hours.

Your environment is important. Make sure you're in a quiet place with a comfortable workspace. This process is effective because it forces you to dig deep inside yourself, clarify your vision of

success and then strategically align your business strategy to these goals. You're the most important part in this whole process, so make sure you feel good.

Often we're so accustomed to giving the answer we think people want to hear that we forget to listen to our inner voice. This process requires you to be vulnerable about your strengths and skill gaps. It might take a few extra questions to peel the onion so to speak, and get to your deeper layers of truth.

A few things to remember:

- **Take a few breaths before you start.** Let everything go: the emails you need to send, what you want to eat for lunch, that presentation that is past due. Put your mobile phone and computer away so you can't hear buzzing. This is your time.
- **Be patient with yourself.** It's okay if parts of this are challenging or frustrating, that's a good thing - it's forcing you to gain clarity in new ways. Try not to judge your immediate reactions, be honest and trust in the process.
- **Ask yourself "why," and ask it often.** If you get stuck, or your initial response doesn't feel fully authentic, ask yourself "why?" It's one of the best ways to unpack each thought and get clarity around the answers inside yourself.
- **Write it out or talk it through.** When the ideas are fresh in your mind, it's good to repeat them back, either on paper or out loud depending on your learning style. If you try and go back later, it's never as detailed as it is in the moment.

Peer Facilitators:

We encourage you to follow the entrepreneur tips in each section and the peer facilitator's guide found at the end of this packet, whether you're doing this alone or with a peer. Working with a fellow founder provides added benefit; you're able to support each other when points get sticky. Ask the other person "why," but don't let them answer with the same words. Force them to really unpack what is driving them when they don't give a detailed answer. Invite each other to slow down to talk through ideas that maybe aren't fully developed. You're essentially holding a mirror up to each other, helping each other be honest and accountable.

Facilitators:

It's critical at the beginning to create a safe, supportive feeling of community whether you're working 1:1 or with a group. Here's some ways to do this:

- **Start by setting some ground rules.** What's discussed stays private and everyone is here to support each other in their work.
- **Invite everyone to take a deep breath.** Put phones and computers away and encourage participants to honor the space they've created by being fully present.
- **Keep a pulse on how entrepreneurs are doing.** Success is open-ended and different for everyone - the goal here isn't one answer or path, it's to help entrepreneurs unlock what's right for them.

During the exercises, entrepreneurs may get stuck or frustrated. This is okay. Invite them to slow down and take the time they need, even if the rest of the group starts moving ahead. If a couple of entrepreneurs are stuck on the same section, this is a great opportunity to slow down as a group.

An effective technique is to work 1:1 with an entrepreneur to help them unpack their thoughts while the rest of the group listens. By listening to their peers work through challenges, founders will be able to relate to the struggles, which will provide them greater clarity.

Other tips:

- Breaks between sections are good. Give people time to stretch, get water, a snack or just a breath.
- Invite entrepreneurs to introduce themselves at the beginning of the session. Having a buddy next to them really helps — especially in big groups. You can have them work in pairs for different sections to encourage peer learning.
- Recognize the different learning styles and invite entrepreneurs to adapt. Some are very visual and it's easier for them to draw out their ideas, others need to talk it through and then write.
- We've left plenty of space for notes, and you can provide more scratch paper as well.

It's time to start!

1 Understand Yourself: Exercise 1.1

Envision Your Work

Connect work with your authentic self

Ask a friend or colleague to guide you through the following visualization by having them read the below to you calmly and slowly.

It's your ideal workday.

With no constraints, let your imagination run wild. You wake up and it's morning. You feel great.

Where are you? What does the room look like? How does the bed feel? Remember, anything is possible. You go to get dressed. What are you wearing? A suit? A swimsuit? Your clothes fit perfectly. What's the weather like outside? Who are you with?

Take a moment and really soak in what's happening. Are you having breakfast? Where are you and what's happening?

Morning is turning into lunch time. Again, what's happening? Are you in an office, are you at home, are you at a beach? Lunch moves into early afternoon. You keep moving through your ideal workday. What's happening around you now?

It's now afternoon and moving into dinner time. Now the sun is starting to set. What time is it? Where are you? What's happening? Who are you with?

You're now getting ready for bed. What time is it? What is happening around you? What are you thinking about as you drift off into perfect sleep?

Open your eyes and fill this space with your vision. Sketch if you'd like.

TO GROUND YOURSELF, MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN A QUIET, COMFORTABLE SPACE. BEFORE YOU START, TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS TO BE IN THE MOMENT. MAKE SURE YOU CAN FEEL YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND AND RELAX.

Summarize your work vision (in a few words):

Align Your Values to Your Work Vision

Connect your values to your work

(1) Circle the three values represented in your ideal vision. If you don't see a fit in this list, create your own.

Authenticity	Justice
Achievement	Kindness
Adventure	Knowledge
Authority	Leadership
Autonomy	Learning
Balance	Love
Beauty	Loyalty
Boldness	Meaningful Work
Compassion	Openness
Challenge	Optimism
Citizenship	Peace
Community	Pleasure
Competency	Poise
Contribution	Popularity
Creativity	Recognition
Curiosity	Religion
Determination	Reputation
Fairness	Respect
Faith	Responsibility
Fame	Security
Freedom	Self-Respect
Friendships	Service
Fun	Spirituality
Growth	Stability
Happiness	Success
Honesty	Status
Humor	Trustworthiness
Influence	Wealth
Inner Harmony	Wisdom

(2) How are these values represented in the box to the left represented in your vision? *For example, what happened in your ideal workday to give you that feeling of freedom?*

(3) What are the top 3 words that represent your work vision?

(4) What are you feeling about these words?

Ground in Your Current Work

Connect your current work to your vision

**ASK YOURSELF “WHY?”
5 TIMES TO FIND THE
INTERNAL DRIVER TO
YOUR WORK.**

Example

Starting with a vague Why: I help people find the right skincare because I want them to have acne free skin.

Why? I care that people have good skin.

Why? Because if they have good skin they feel good.

Why? Because their skin is clear, smooth, spot-free and they don't have to worry.

Why? Because they know their skin looks beautiful and they feel good.

Why? They feel special and confident.

This reveals a deeper Why: I empower people to feel more confident about their skin and therefore themselves.

(1) What's the goal of the work articulated in your current vision? Why are you doing this work?

Why? _____

Why? _____

Why? _____

Why? _____

Why? _____



(2) What is your deeper **Why**?

Align Your Strengths with Your Work

Embrace what makes you unique

(1) What do you offer to this world, whether it's a skill, resource or experience? To put it simply, what would you pay yourself to do, even if it's a job that doesn't exist?

(2) What are three words you would use to describe yourself?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

(3) What are three unique strengths or ways you excel in the work you do?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

(4) In your earlier dream vision, how are you helping, building, designing or leading? Be descriptive about what you're bringing to the work you do.

(5) Is this aligned with your deeper Why (see Exercise 1.3)? If you feel stuck, move to the next page. Also, take a look at the Facilitator's Guide, Exercise 1.4 and 1.5.

WHEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU WOULD PAY YOURSELF TO DO, IT COULD BE PERSONAL AND/OR PROFESSIONAL. FOR EXAMPLE, ORGANIZING A CLOSET (PERSONAL) AND/OR LAUNCHING A MARKETING CAMPAIGN (PROFESSIONAL).

Write Your Vision Statement

Align your work to your vision

(1) This is your Vision Statement:

I want to _____ by _____
(Your work vision. See Exercise 1.1.) (Work or action you're taking. See Exercise 1.4.)

because I believe _____.
(Why you are doing this work. See Exercise 1.3.)

I am uniquely positioned to do this work because I _____,
_____ and _____.
(Your unique strengths. See Exercise 1.4.)

(2) This is your concise Vision Statement:

I am _____ and I _____
(Your name.) (Actions you are taking, i.e. building robots that clean up trash. See Exercise 1.4.)

because I care about _____.
(Your deeper Why. See Exercise 1.3.)

Define Your Destination

Articulate the change you want to make

(1) Envision the future after you've changed it. What does it look like? What are people doing that's different from today? You can sketch, write or map it out here.

(2) Change Statement:

I know I am successful when _____
(Current state of things.)

_____ becomes _____.
(Future state of things.)

What are you changing? _____

_____.

(3) Concise Change Statement. The change you want to make is your destination.

I want to _____
(The change you are making. See Change Statement above.)

because _____.
(Your deeper Why. See Exercise 1.3.)

2 Build a Plan: Exercise 2.1

Bridge Your Vision to Your Goal

Identify key actions to work towards in the next 3 months

(1) Write your Vision Statement. See Exercise 1.5.

I am _____ and I

because I care about _____.

(2) Identify three actions you need to take to achieve this vision.

Examples:

I need to hire a team.

I need to expand to 3 markets.

I need to get 10 new customers.

Action _____

_____ to

so _____.

Action _____

_____ to

so _____.

Action _____

_____ to

so _____.

(3) Why do you need to do these actions? Be specific.

(4) Circle the ones that you want to prioritize. Are there any that you need to do first?

MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN FULL CONTROL OF EACH OF THESE ACTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU CAN'T CONTROL WHEN YOUR PERFECT CANDIDATE WILL START ON YOUR TEAM. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR IT? WHAT ARE THE CONSIDERATIONS YOU HAVE TO MAKE TO EXECUTE ON THESE ACTIONS?

Set Your Milestone

Identify a path to get there

(1) Take your priority action from Exercise 2.1 and make this goal a milestone.

Milestone: _____

Example: Build a scalable sales pipeline

Remember: a milestone should be only what is in your control. You can build a pipeline; you can't determine when a customer will buy.

(2) By accomplishing your milestone, what do you gain?

Example: I understand what makes a good customer

How it helps: Sustainability → I don't have to work on every deal, starting from market validation → customers leading growth

(3) Write out 3 different ways you can accomplish your milestone.

Example:

- 1. Understand my sales process*
- 2. Create a prospective list*
- 3. Create sales materials for my team to use*

1.

2.

3.

You can repeat this process with the other items you want to prioritize. This helps you map out what you need to get to the next level.

2 Build a Plan: Exercise 2.3

Plan Your Milestone

Identify skills or resources needed

(1) What do you need to do to achieve your milestone?

Action 1

Action 2

Action 3

(2) Skills: Your abilities and capabilities today.

(2a) Your skills:

(2b) Skills you need:

(3) Resources: People and tools that help you get to the next level.

(3a) What do you need?

(4) Write your Milestone Statement.

In the next 3 months, I will _____
(Write your milestone from Exercise 2.2.)

by _____
(Actions you will take to achieve your milestone. See box above.)

Build Skills

Identify the skills you need

(1) Write your Vision Statement. See Exercise 1.5.

I am _____ and I

because I care about _____

_____.

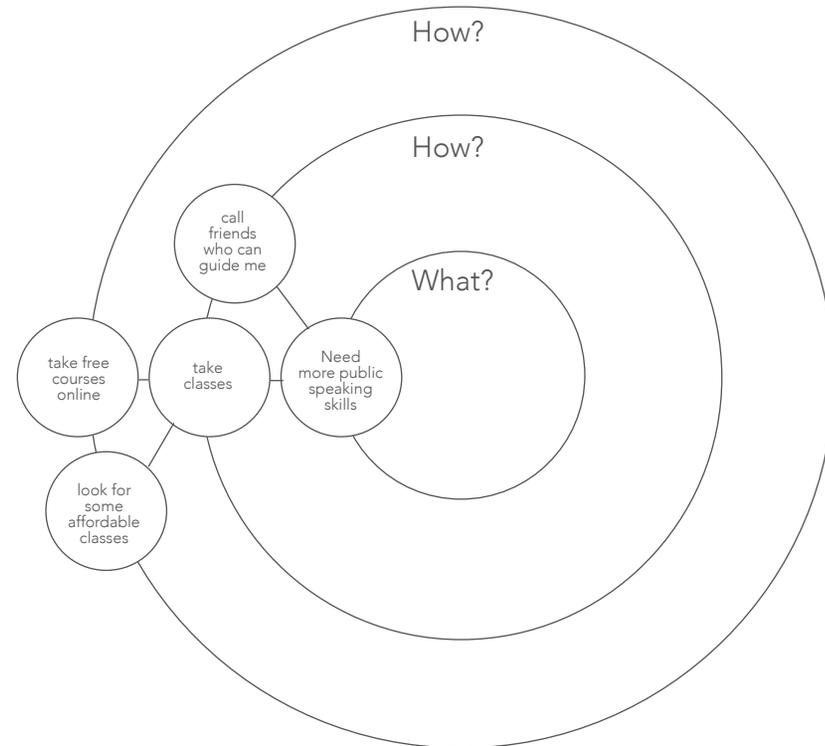
(2) Write out the **skills** you already have to help you reach your milestone, and the **skills** you need. Use Exercise 2.3 as a reference.

What I need:

Why I need it:

How I can get it:

(3) Use this bullseye to map out the skills you're hoping to acquire. Start at the center and move outwards.



**LESS IS MORE. WRITE IN ACTIONABLE TERMS.
THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU TRULY NEED TO
ACCOMPLISH YOUR MILESTONE IN 3 MONTHS.**

2 Build a Plan: Exercise 2.5

Build Resources

Identify the resources you need

(1) Write your Vision Statement. See Exercise 1.5.

I am _____ and I

because I care about _____

_____.

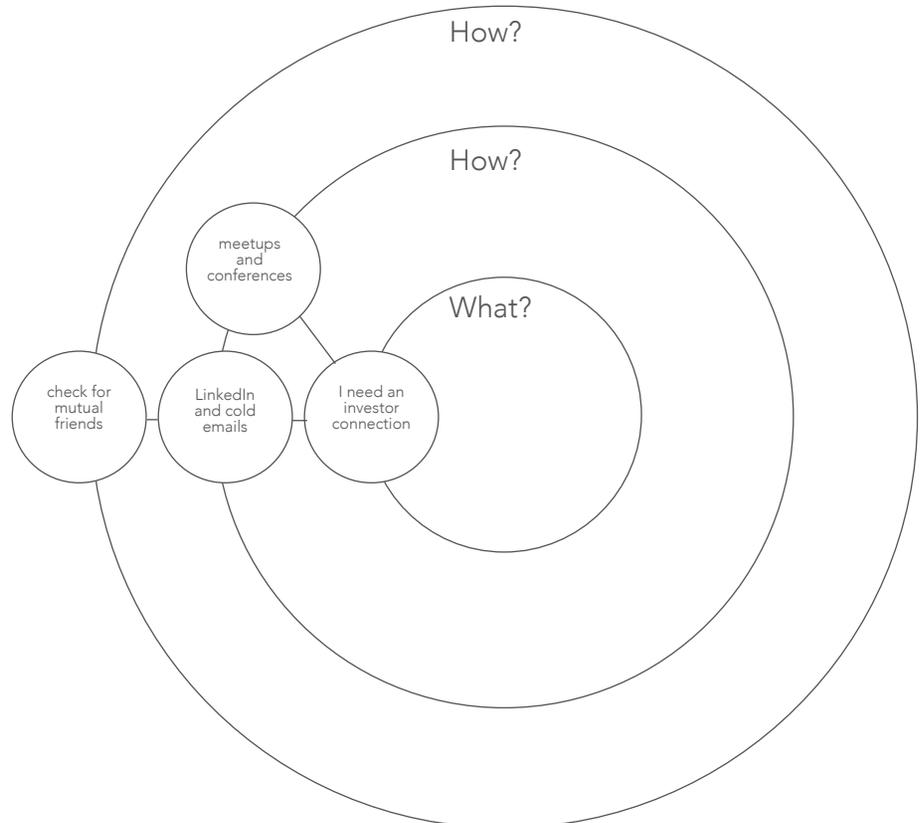
(2) Write out the **resources** you already have to help you reach your milestone, and the **resources** you need. Use Exercise 2.3 as a reference.

Who/what I need:

Why I need it:

How I can get it:

(3) Use this bullseye to map out the resources you're hoping to acquire. Start at the center and move outwards.



Milestone Calendar, Month 1

Create an action plan at the beginning of each month

(1) Write your Milestone Statement.

In the next 3 months, I will _____
(Write your milestone from Exercise 2.2.)

by _____.
(Actions you will take to acheive your milestone. See Exercise 2.3.)

(2) Hold yourself accountable.

_____, _____
(Date at the end of Month 1) (Year)

At the end of the month, I know I am successful when...

(3) What do you need to accomplish in order to achieve your milestone? Remember, things can take longer than expected, so plan accordingly.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

3 Stay Accountable: Exercise 3.2

Milestone Calendar, Month 2

Create an action plan at the beginning of each month

(1) Write your Milestone Statement.

In the next 2 months, I will _____
(Write your milestone from Exercise 2.2.)

by _____.
(Actions you will take to acheive your milestone. See Exercise 2.3.)

(2) Hold yourself accountable.

_____, _____
(Date at the end of Month 2) (Year)

At the end of the month, I know I am successful when...

(3) What do you need to accomplish in order to achieve your milestone? Remember, things can take longer than expected, so plan accordingly.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Milestone Calendar, Month 3

Create an action plan at the beginning of each month

(1) Write your Milestone Statement.

In the next month, I will _____
(Write your milestone from Exercise 2.2.)

by _____.
(Actions you will take to acheive your milestone. See Exercise 2.3.)

(2) Hold yourself accountable.

_____/_____
(Date at the end of Month 3) (Year)

At the end of the month, I know I am successful when...

(3) What do you need to accomplish in order to achieve your milestone? Remember, things can take longer than expected, so plan accordingly.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

3 Stay Accountable: Exercise 3.4

Reflect and Reset on _____

(Date your milestone is set to be completed.)

Honor your learning

(1) Write your Milestone Statement.

In the last 3 months, I have _____
(Write your milestone from Exercise 2.2.)

by _____.
(Actions you took to achieve your milestone. See Exercise 2.3.)

(2) Did you meet your milestone? Why or why not?

(3) Reflect: What resources and networks did you build that you're most proud of? What skills did you gain?

(4) What actions do you wish you had taken? Why?

SET A CALENDAR REMINDER TO REVISIT THIS PAGE AT THE END OF YOUR MILESTONE.

(5) What's your plan for your next milestone?

Congratulations!

You've made it to the end of your milestone.

Time to Start Again...

We hope you can repeat this Milestone Mapping process many times during your entrepreneurial journey to help you build the impact you envision.

We'd love to hear your perspective. In the spirit of continuous improvement, this toolkit will evolve as we get more insights from entrepreneurs like you! Please fill our [survey \(http://bit.ly/2zHwYeQ\)](http://bit.ly/2zHwYeQ) or drop us a line at hello@theCenter.nasdaq.org.



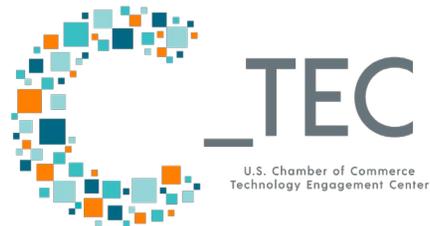
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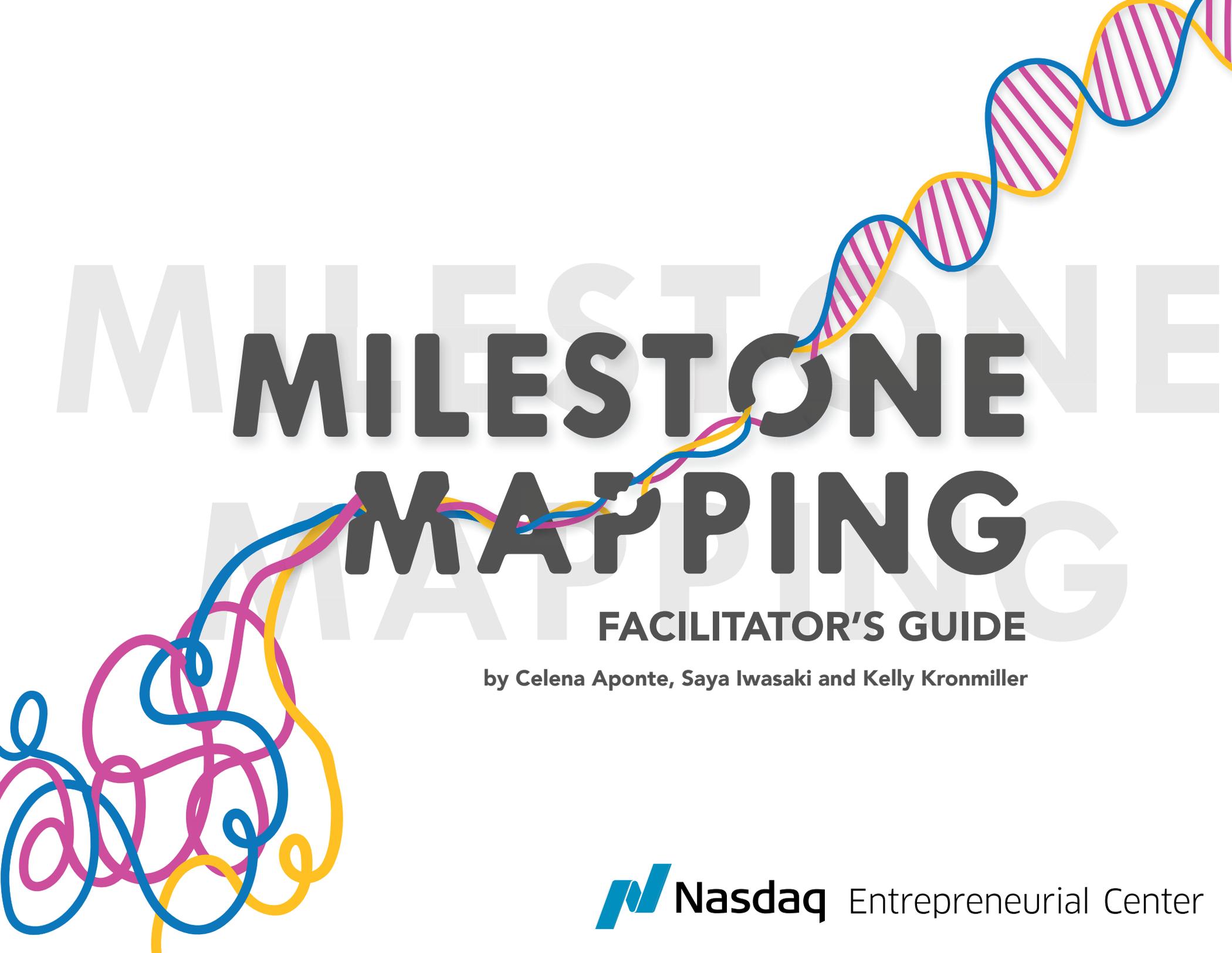
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As a non-profit, our mission is to deliver world-class resources and mentoring to enable every entrepreneur across the globe to realize their maximum potential.

Visit us at <http://thecenter.nasdaq.org/> to learn more.



MILESTONE MAPPING

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

by Celena Aponte, Saya Iwasaki and Kelly Kronmiller

Entrepreneurs:

This guide is designed to accompany the toolkit. You may be working on your own or with a peer. Regardless, the peer facilitator's guide is designed to give you added context and tips to help you gain focus and clarity through the process.

As a peer facilitator, you are responsible for listening, repeating back what you hear and being a patient, supportive guide. In return, as an entrepreneur, you'll have a thoughtful companion who can help you untangle priorities. If you're working by yourself, this process and guide will provide you prompts when you get stuck.

Have fun with it! This process is rewarding in all kinds of ways.

Ask what you or your partner wish to get out of this session:

Facilitators:

Your work to help entrepreneurs is critical to their success. We recognize no two entrepreneurs are the same and positive group dynamics are made, not a given. A facilitator's role is to create an environment where every entrepreneur feels 100% supported.

This guide will provide you with a set of tools to help you do the important work of listening to entrepreneurs and asking questions that inspire clarity and focus.

This is designed as a reference point. Your guidance is directional, not prescriptive, meaning you're not giving entrepreneurs the answers but instead helping them find the answers themselves.

Be sure to read the room. Everyone has different learning styles and some may not feel comfortable asking questions if they're stuck. Check in to see how people are doing throughout the process and read body language for signs of confusion. Remember, this is a guide so you can adapt to learning styles as needed.

A great way to get started is inviting entrepreneurs to share what they want to get out of this session. This also helps you identify how each entrepreneur wants to be supported.

Enjoy your time! We found a lot of magic in helping entrepreneurs unlock the answers that fuel their dreams.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

- (1) Make sure you're in a quiet, comfortable space and can quietly focus on this visualization. It's okay if you struggle with focus at first. Think about your breath, and let the thoughts flow while they're fresh in your mind.
- (2) We recommend one founder reads the prompts while the other closes their eyes and does the vision work. And then trade. You will need someone to read the exercises, calmly and slowly, so you can close your eyes and visualize.
- (3) Have fun with it! Visioning is a great way to get beyond your day-to-day and imagine your future as you see success.

“IT HELPED ME DEFINE THE ‘WHY,’ WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF CREATING AND SELLING THE BUSINESS TO OTHERS.”

- ALEX

Facilitator's Guide

- (1) It's critical to create a safe, dedicated space to do this exercise. Make sure it's quiet. Encourage everyone to relax and have fun. There is no right or wrong here. It's their ideal workday of the future, after all.
- (2) Invite entrepreneurs to close their eyes. Make sure you read the prompts slowly and carefully to give them time to move through their day in their own minds.
- (3) Visioning is a powerful tool for gaining clarity. Entrepreneurs are dreamers by nature, and they're designing something that doesn't yet exist. In the daily grind of work, it's hard to hold onto that big vision. Imagining the outcomes or the effects of their success can offer all kinds of insights that are useful in assessing where they are today and where they need to go next.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

- (1) Get all the salient ideas down on paper as quickly as you can. Draw, outline, scribble, whatever creative form it takes - the only goal here is to capture everything that happened in your ideal workday while it's fresh in your mind.
- (2) Then focus in on why it was ideal. What brought you joy and fulfillment? Was fulfillment felt more in certain parts of the day? Take some time to reflect on all the details.

Notes:

Facilitator's Guide

- (1) It's time to unpack what's in each entrepreneur's mind, which may feel unrealistic and fantastical. It's important to encourage founders to put all their drivers (conscious and unconscious) on paper, whether they draw or write. If they're able to capture what's most important to them in this ideal state, it's going to help them prioritize their work in later stages.
- (2) Make sure after the initial brain dump that they've identified what has brought them joy and fulfillment - was it the day as a whole? Were there certain key factors? What were those factors?
- (3) Invite entrepreneurs to share their visions with each other. It's amazing and exciting to see how differently each founder defines success. Some entrepreneurs may dream about being on a beach somewhere with their family, others driving up to a huge office building in a yellow Lamborghini. Sharing builds camaraderie.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) Be specific and detailed in the words you use. The more specific you are now, the easier it will be later. Only when the founder, in the toolkit example, dug deeper did she understand that curing acne is her way to help people feel more confident.

(2) Asking Why 5 times is a powerful tool, but it's also hard to do on your own. This is a good section to do with a peer or a friend. The first answer to Why is never detailed enough. Again, think about peeling the onion. The goal of this exercise is to get to the core internal drivers.

Notes:

Facilitator's Guide

(1) This is an important section, so slow down and really make sure entrepreneurs have captured their deeper Why. Most often it's a human benefit, either social, physical or environmental. Examples include helping people live happier, healthier or with opportunity and abundance.

(2) Here's another example. A founder of a video monitored lock started with: "I can help you identify burglars." While that's a reason, it's not a core driving force that gets him to go to work on his hardest days. After asking Why 5 times, he realized his deeper Why was to help people live freely without worrying. He personally experienced a terrible break-in and didn't want anyone ever to have the fear, anxiety and loss of control he felt from that experience.

(3) Depending on learning styles, sometimes this exercise is best done verbally. It's easier for some to respond when they are being interviewed. We prefer to do this in a group setting, so others hear how clarity is gained by digging into the true drivers of their Why. The best way to get people to unpack their thinking is to repeat back the answers to them with another Why at the end (i.e. why do you care that people eat healthy).

Peer Facilitator's Guide

- (1) There is no right or wrong here, just select what comes to mind immediately. Your first choice is the right one.
- (2) Setting a timer for this exercise is helpful. Give yourself 3 minutes, it should happen fast.
- (3) Doubting skills? We suggest asking a friend to help figure out your talent.

Facilitator's Guide

- (1) Set a timer for 3 minutes. You want to give entrepreneurs enough time to do this exercise, but not enough time that they start over analyzing, which is easy to do.
- (2) If they're not sure what they're good at, have them ask a friend to help them answer this question.

Notes:

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) The goal is to prioritize - you're no doubt good at lots of things. Where do you excel? Take the time and space to value your own strengths and work; think of it as a gift to yourself.

(2) Use simple, precise and descriptive words. What are you doing? Is it designing, building, making, creating? Those are all actions versus "being an entrepreneur," which is passive and could mean different things to different people.

(3) This section may be a easy, or you may feel like your Why is disconnected from your work. That's okay. Try to unpack your Why by working with a peer or a friend.

(4) If you're still struggling, embrace it. The points of struggle may bring you some additional clarity. We worked with an entrepreneur working on a food tech startup who struggled with this exercise. While he pushed through the other sections, he felt they were not authentic answers. Upon reflection weeks later, he made the choice to pivot his company and realign his work more towards his higher vision. He's now focusing on economic empowerment rather than improving the food system.

Facilitator's Guide

(1) It's good to give people quiet time to think, and then another space to share out loud or together. Some entrepreneurs may be inspired by the process while others will need to talk through their thoughts.

(2) People will struggle in this section if they haven't identified their deeper Why or if it doesn't feel authentic. This is okay. Revisit the 5 Whys exercise with them and focus on extracting their key drivers. Talking 1:1 often helps bring clarity.

(3) In some cases, their Why may not be connected to their business. We had an entrepreneur who wasn't able to make it past this section. He identified his deeper Why as economic empowerment, not the future of food as he had thought. As a result, he couldn't connect his current work to this higher vision of economic empowerment. While he moved forward with the rest of the group, he didn't really believe in his answers. When we checked in the week after, he thanked us for the clarity. He had pivoted his business and was moving in a different direction. He shared that it was a sticky point for him for a long time - but he didn't have the courage or know-how to make a decision around it. This process helped him.

(4) Understanding misalignment is a powerful, positive outcome in this process. It won't feel rewarding in the moment, it's important as the facilitator to be supportive and let the entrepreneur work through the answers with some space.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) The power of this process is to gain clarity and focus. And our natural tendency is to use lots of words. You may need to write it out long-form first, and then rewrite it using more concise, precise language. It's vital to simplify the language and use only the most important action words. Unnecessary words, just like thoughts, can become noisy and distracting. For example, I want people everywhere to have access to community, collaborate with each other and find the support they need → could become → Empower communities to work together to solve for homelessness.

(2) It's tempting to frame this statement in the negative. We encourage you to reframe the language into the positive. For example, change the behavior from "stop people from eating unhealthy" into the positive "help people eat healthy." If you're designing for a positive goal, you're coming from a place of abundance, opportunity and optimism.

Facilitator's Guide

(1) This is a tricky transition for some. Some founders naturally have been conditioned to resist putting themselves first, and will feel they need to look at the world through their business lens. Again, the power in this approach is connecting the personal drivers to the business. Why? Because the founder is a critical asset to the company. Their strengths and passions propel the company forward in smart, profound ways when aligned. And the key thing here is to build that alignment. It's good to encourage founders to stay grounded in what's most important to them, then frame their work in terms of the actions their business needs to take.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) You're going to have bias here. It's natural; you're human. Challenge yourself. Have you identified priority action(s) you need to take?

(2) For example, I need to expand to 3 markets SO I can validate my market BECAUSE I am going to need to raise capital at some point soon.

- If the goal is to validate your market to give you future capital raising options, is expanding to 3 markets the only way you can get there? Is there a simpler, faster, better way you can accomplish this same thing?

“BECAUSE I WAS ABLE TO QUICKLY GAIN FOCUS, I COULD CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE MOST IMPORTANT MILESTONE TO MY BUSINESS – WHICH WITH ALL THE PRESSURES AND COMPLEXITIES AROUND BUILDING A BUSINESS, IT IS HARDER TO DO THAN YOU MAY THINK!”

- MICHELLE

Facilitator's Guide

This is another great place to stop and have people work in pairs. You can also work 1:1 with an entrepreneur and the others listen in. You want to help them stress test their statements for two things:

(1) Is what they're committing to inside their own control, or are they dependent on other people or market dynamics?

(2) Are the actions they want to take the best way to achieve their goal? Is there another shorter, cheaper, less exhausting path to get to their goal? Entrepreneurs are dreamers, they will go big and bold. There could be situations where they are chasing actions they think they need to take, but can actually take smaller actions that get them there faster.

For example: I need to expand to 3 markets SO I can validate my market BECAUSE I am going to need to raise capital at some point soon.

- If the goal is to validate a market to give this entrepreneur future capital raising options, is expanding to 3 markets the only way they can get there? Is there a simpler, faster, better way they can accomplish this same thing?

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) The number one reason milestones aren't accomplished is because they're unrealistic from the start. When you set strategic, smart goals that are aligned to a business' overall definition of success, growth happens in surprisingly natural and efficient ways. That's why it's important to spend time breaking down the desired outcomes. What role can you play in achieving success without depending on others or unknown dynamics? What can you make happen in the next 3 months to get you to your goal?

(2) This exercise helps you analyze what is in your control versus what is not. For example, "fundraising" can be an important goal and there's often a lot of urgency around it. However, at the end of the day, you can't control when a check will be written. Therefore, it's critical to think about what is in your control. Could you "develop a fundraising strategy?" This creates a set of actions that you can control (i.e. researching potential investors, putting pitch materials together, evaluating the best opportunities for fundraising and assessing all your options from traditional to non-traditional investors). The accomplishment of this milestone is also achievable, and you're learning and pushing forward without being tied to the market dynamics you can't control.

(3) If it feels unknown or mysterious, it's not the right milestone. Free yourself from having to make the future happen in only one perfect way. Instead, work on building options to get to your goal. How can you best set yourself up for success?

Facilitator's Guide

(1) This is another great place to use the 5 Whys exercise. "Why is that the goal?" Often, entrepreneurs come in with a goal of "fundraising" or "growing a team." In asking Why and forcing them to dig deeper, we help them recognize there is more work, exploration or a deeper problem they need to solve.

(2) As a facilitator, you're like a doctor. And you're there to ask them about the problems they have - their symptoms - to help identify the root cause of the pain they're feeling. Sure, you can put a bandaid on it, but how can you prevent the cut from happening again? What are their options? Are there other paths they can take?

(3) For example, do they need to fundraise, or can they use customers to grow their business and shift priorities to selling to customers? You want to:

- Help entrepreneurs set goals based on challenges they need to solve.
- Train entrepreneurs to focus on what they can control as a pathway to building strong, sustainable futures where the root problem is solved.

(4) When you remove the thing they can't control, you're releasing a lot of fear, frustration and anxiety, opening up space for them to be reconnected and energized by what they're doing. It's a powerful takeaway.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) This is another way to stress test your milestone. You may encounter a situation where you know the actions you need to take, but are stumped about what to do next. Stick with it. Take time to break down what seems overwhelming into smaller actions.

(2) You may not have the right milestone. When that happens, take a step back and work on a new one. Again, there is no right or wrong here. Be honest and ask each other the hard questions. You have all the answers inside yourself. Trust that.

Notes:

“IT PROVIDES A CONTAINER OF TIME TO WORK, UNPACK THE LAYERS, UNDERSTAND WHAT’S INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF YOUR CONTROL, AND SET ACHIEVABLE, STRATEGIC MILESTONES.”

- GRACE

Facilitator's Guide

(1) Entrepreneurs are likely connected to a set of resources, tools or information. If you're working with a group, encourage other participants to share ideas for closing these resource and network gaps. These sessions become extremely productive when entrepreneurs can help each other, and you'll find lots of organic ways they can. The first step is for them to be able to articulate what they need for themselves, which they can practice by making an ask to the group.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) You may find that you have more resources and a bigger network than you think, which is exciting! It's worth taking the time to complete this exercise fully because by being forced to think about your current network, new options will be revealed.

(2) If you get stuck, ask: "What do you need to achieve by the end of the month to be on the right track? What are the 5 things you need to do to get there?" You're welcome to outline day-by-day or even week-by-week.

(3) Don't get too hung up on skills versus resources. We generally think of skills as capabilities you have and a person (mentor, coach, advisor) as a resource.

Notes:

Facilitator's Guide

(1) A resource can be a person, information, a tool or support. Remind entrepreneurs to think about this holistically.

(2) In general, we define a person (mentor, coach and advisor) as a resource. Networking is a skill, but it's too vague. We encourage entrepreneurs to define specifically what/who they need access to as a result of networking in the next resource section. We've included a list of skills here to spark ideas:

Brand development	Human resources	Speaking
Building a product	Legal	Storytelling
Building culture	Networking skills	Tax
Building sales teams	People management	User experience
Design	Selling to consumers	User research
Finance projections	Selling to enterprise	User testing
Hiring	Social media	Writing

(3) Sometimes the lines between skills and resources can be blurry for an entrepreneur. Traditionally, the impulse is to fill gaps. Especially for early-stage ventures, encourage them to stop and inventory what skills they have. They will be able to put new resources to work and hire for what they can't do today, immediately making their organization stronger. By thinking about their own strengths, they're able to build a team that is complementary - focus on prioritizing skills needed for the long-term versus immediate pain points.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) This may feel tedious, but stick with it. You've got people, skills and resources in your head - this is a productive place to organize them all. And in doing so, you'll realize the gaps and recognize the connections you may have forgotten about or haven't accessed in a while.

(2) It's also a powerful tool to help clarify your ask(s) to other entrepreneurs and mentors. When people offer to help, you'll now know what you need and why.

Facilitator's Guide

(1) Entrepreneurs will be tired here and this section may feel like a push. Encourage them to keep working. Upon completion, many entrepreneurs will feel a boost in their confidence. Here's why:

- They gain clarity on what their specific gaps are and who they need to fill them instead of feeling overwhelmed or that everything is impossible.
- In many cases, they gain confidence to see that they have more resources at their fingertips than they think.

Notes:

Peer Facilitator's Guide

(1) You might struggle with this section because you can't predict the future - who can? Some entrepreneurs have chosen to fill out these calendars one month at a time.

(2) It also may be helpful to start by filling out the "I know I'm successful when..." column. Then work backwards to fill in the activities and dates. Only include what is in your control. How are you going to be able to track against your bigger goal? What do you need to accomplish by when, and how?

(3) Remember, things happen and timelines change, so allow yourself extra time.

(4) This is a great tool to share with your team, hang on your wall and integrate into your workday. We've had entrepreneurs put these Milestone Maps directly on their calendars. Think about what works for you. This is not a one and done exercise, but something you can reference and reuse.

LOOK AT EXERCISES 2.4 AND 2.5 TO FIND THE DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH YOUR NEEDS. USE IT TO FILL YOUR CALENDAR!

Facilitator's Guide

(1) Founders won't be able to predict the future, that's not the intention. Help them define what are key markers on the road to success. How will they know they're on the right path and on schedule?

(2) Some entrepreneurs may be able to fill out 3 months ahead, others may not. There is no right or wrong. Instead you want to make sure entrepreneurs take time to outline the steps to reach their bigger goals. Help them focus on what's in their direct control so that they set themselves up for success.

(3) Encourage them to continue using this tool as a reference point. We've had entrepreneurs share with their teams, hang it on the wall in the office and even put actions directly into their calendars. This should be used and shared continuously.

Peer Facilitator's Guide

It's time to celebrate. Whatever happened, you completed a body of work and learned something that put you further ahead of where you started. Congratulations!

Upon reflection, what are you going to do differently? What are you going to keep doing? It's time to start again.

Facilitator's Guide

Whatever happens, this is a time for celebration. Too often in the world of entrepreneurship, the special moments are not recognized, and they fade into the daily grind. It's important to support entrepreneurs by helping them recognize their learnings.

It's not about the outcomes, but how founders are able to maximize their own talents to fuel their business goals. Learning how to build that internal/external alignment is key - and a muscle that is developed through practice over time.

Encourage entrepreneurs to start fresh and go through this process again, whether they do it on their own, with a peer or as a facilitated group. You could even invite those who have been through it once to join a session with new founders. They'll be able to mentor their peers along the way.

Notes:

Congratulations!

You've played an important role in making Milestones.

Time to Start Again...

We hope you can continue to facilitate this Milestone Mapping process to help entrepreneurs build their big vision.

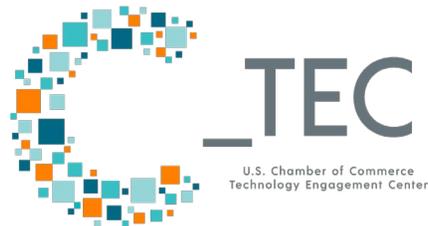
We'd love to hear your perspective. In the spirit of continuous improvement, this toolkit will evolve as we get more insights from facilitators like you! Please fill our [survey \(http://bit.ly/2zHwYeQ\)](http://bit.ly/2zHwYeQ) or drop us a line at hello@theCenter.nasdaq.org.



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