The analytical approach in museums

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Aim and objectives

This presentation is about the analytic approach in the decision-making process, through a deep analysis of the context and the right interpretation of data.

While in the first unit we've traced the development of the decision-making process applied to a common person and based on human instinct, now we want to discuss the decision-making skill in museums, used by managers or someone else who has to take decisions.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

- Recognize an analytical approach

- Develop a critical look on the topic

- Use the Force Field Analyze as a tool

- Identify phases, barriers, and tactics

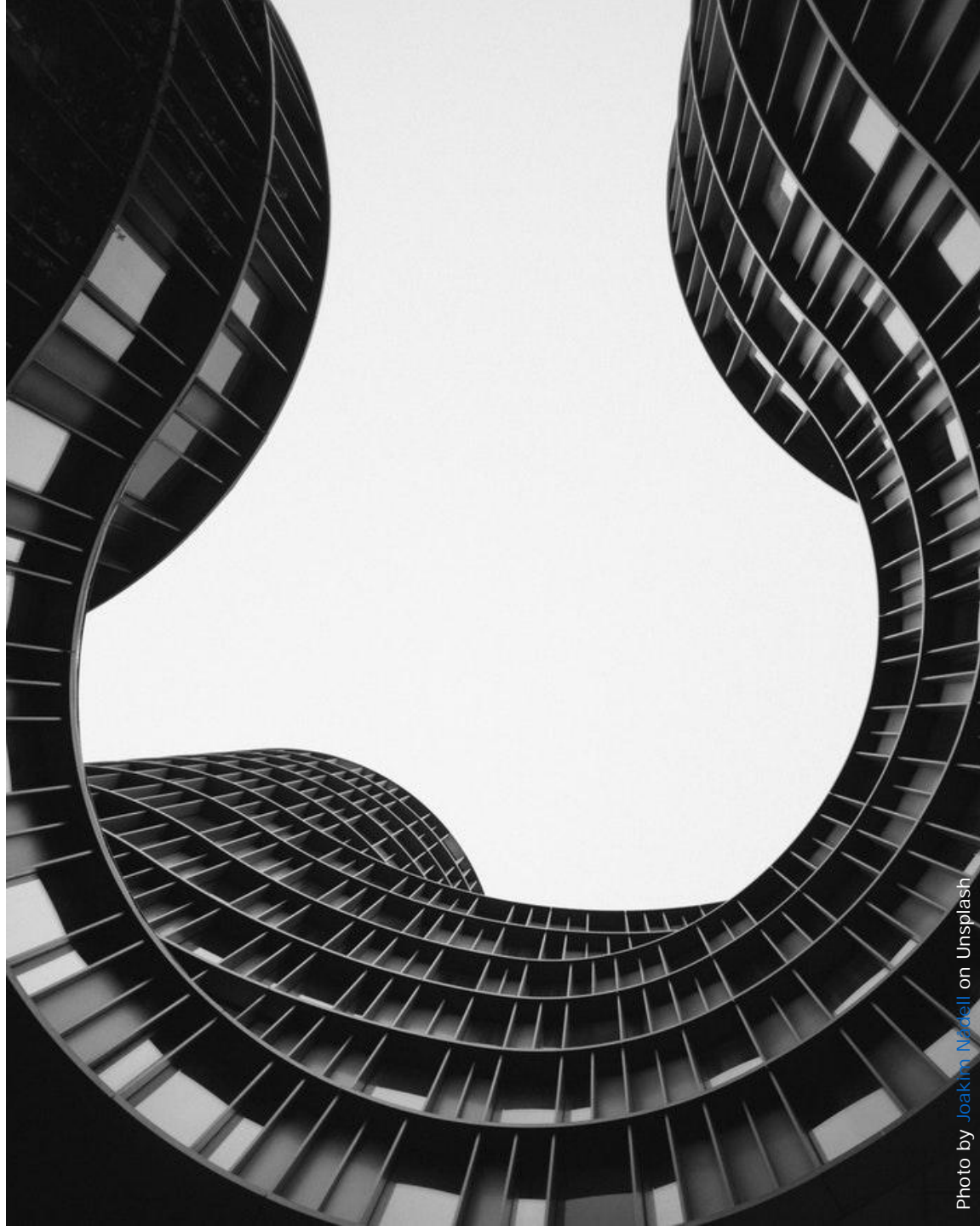- Become aware of the main steps to create a data-driven organization

Terms and keywords

Analytical approach

It's an approach that allows reducing the negative effects of choices thanks to the deep analysis of various factors

Tactics

The terms means the choice of taking specific actions to deliver a strategy

Data-driven organization

It is an organization that bases its decisions in the rigorous analysis of data, rather than being guided by human instinct

Terms and keywords

Key performance indicators

The KPIs help in the assessment of the digital presence and the plan to achieve it

Force Field Analysis

It's an analysis that focuses on the different factors that support and stop the current organizational state of an institution

Potential barriers

They are the factors that stop changes but having possible tactics mean having possible solutions to overcome them

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How making change real

Photo by LeoNeoBoy on Pixabay

Introduction

A close match between organisational objectives, the environment, leadership and decision-making styles is necessary for the effective management of art organizations.

The digital project expert in museums, Andrew Lewis, states that all projects involve changes in the **current state of an organization** and this means that not everybody will support this change, for different reasons.

The decision-maker at the museum, whether a manager or project leader, should anticipate possible obstacles that would block change using an analytical approach and some **tactics**, intending the choice of making specific actions to deliver a successful strategy.
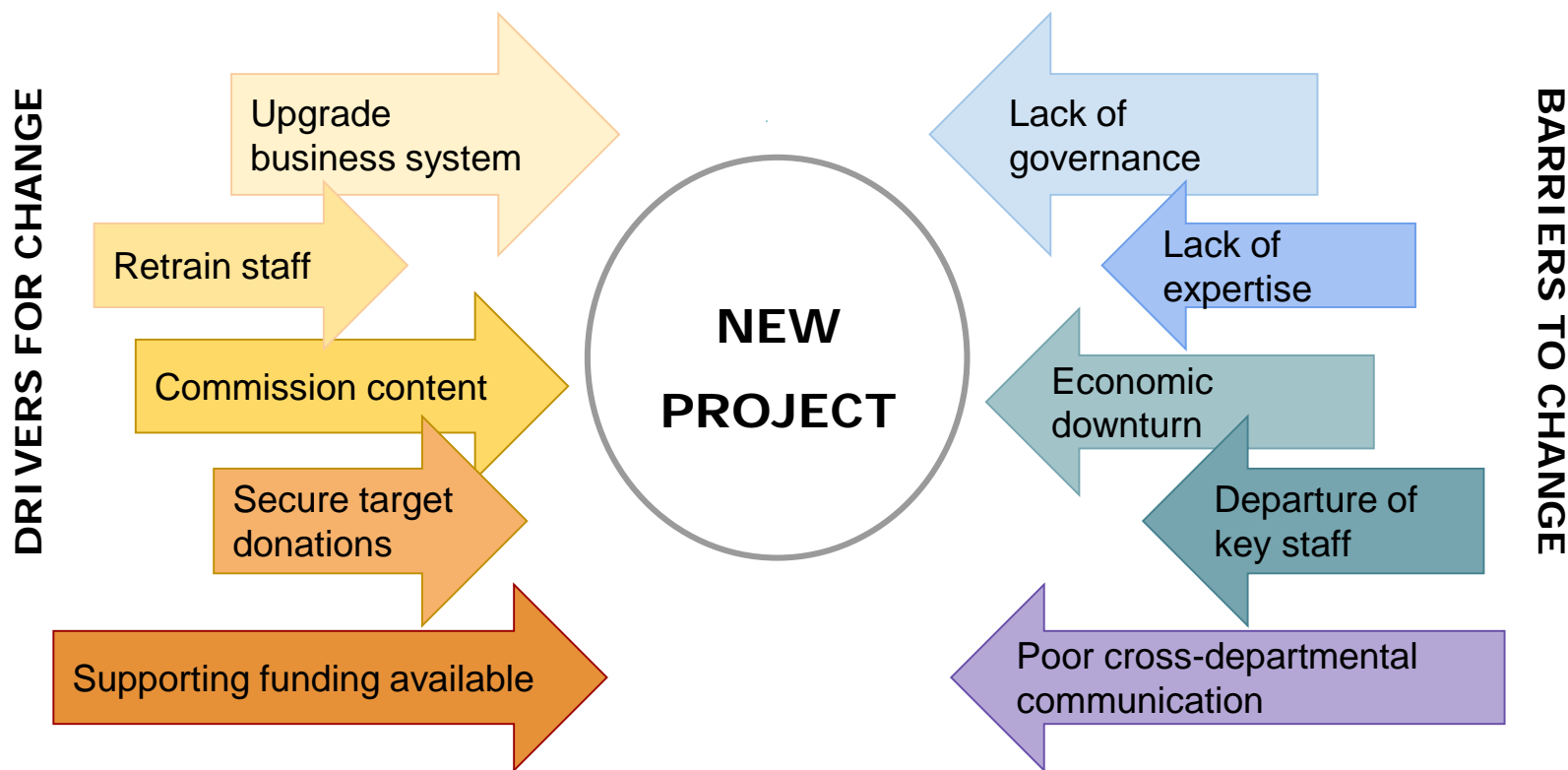
![Mu.SA museum sector alliance logo]

Photo by Austin Distel on Unsplash

In his paper *Tactics and decision making for successful museum digital projects,* Lewis suggests the **Force Field Analysis** as a powerful tool to manage projects and eventual barriers to the change.

This method was proposed in 1951 by the sociologist Lewin and later adapted within business studies. As it is shown, it encourages you to consider opposing forces, ones that support the change (and so, the project) and ones that resist it.

Moreover, he suggests to split the project into phases and to examine the **barriers** and the potential tactics to overcome them.

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The Force Field Analysis/2

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Upgrade business system

Retrain staff

Commission content

Secure target donations

Supporting funding available

NEW PROJECT

BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Lack of governance

Lack of expertise

Economic downturn

Departure of key staff

Poor cross-departmental communication

Pattern 1: Simplified example of Force Field Analysis model showing project scoping issues

Phases, barriers, tactics/1

Here there is an example of the main first phases of a project, with the illustration of potential barriers and possible tactics.

PROJECT PHASE	POTENTIAL BARRIERS	POSSIBLE TACTICS
Identifying the need	• Proposals for projects driven by non-strategic or personal interest • Digital technology changing too fast to predict impact	• Refer all proposals to the digital strategy manager • Propose shorter projects or Agile feature development
Selecting an approach	Donors and influential partners with an interest in potential solutions	Define terms of reference as early as possible

PROJECT PHASE	POTENTIAL BARRIERS	POSSIBLE TACTICS
Defining the scope	Criteria based on outputs instead of objectives	Use SMART targets
Creating a project plan	Museums staff aren't familiar with the use of online project-sharing space	Create outline plans that are sufficient for each staff audience
Identifying and allocating project resources	Lack of access to internal resources (expert staff)	Careful separation of tasks that only expert can do

Phases, barriers, tactics/3

PROJECT PHASE	POTENTIAL BARRIERS	POSSIBLE TACTICS
Testing and signing off the project products	Testing is not representative of users especially of a powerful minority	Do user testing and background research before scoping
Launching the new process	Indecision causes delay	Plan soft launches

In addition to a deep analysis of the scenario, the analysis of data seems to be relevant.

The increasing use of Google Analytics and other forms of digital analytics is linked to a wider organizational change of navigating towards **data-driven decision-making.**

The importance of data analysis

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Museums and data

A defining characteristic of **data-driven organizations** is that they base their decisions in the rigorous analysis of data rather than being guided by the human instinct and this separates great businesses from good ones.

According to Sairanen, an expert on digital media in museums, data allows museums to justify their organizational decisions to their funders and to demonstrate their economic and social impact.

Moreover, digital data gives museums the means to **evaluate the success** of their online activities such as Google Analytics can help in the understanding of how museums website is performing and get to know their online audience better.

Photo by Clique Images on Unsplash

To become a data-driven organization is essential to install and maintain an analytic culture in which data is saluted and celebrated rather than disregarded.

Sairanen suggests to follow these relevant steps:

1) Enlist your colleagues to the data cause

On an organizational level, it could be helpful hiring a data analyst, showing both colleagues and senior management how well data can guide decisions.

2) Be strategic: do the most important thing, not everything

A strategic plan allows you to communicate the role and objectives of the analysis, the key performance indicators (**KPIs**) that will be used to assess the success of the digital presence and the plan to achieve it, as we discussed in the unit of management skills. In formulating a strategic plan, it is essential to define your goals before starting to collect data and initiate an inter-departmental dialogue on the mission. This information is usually included in the museum's digital strategy.

3) Increase data literacy and create dashboards

There are two important points to this action: spark an interest in data within the museum and make sure people share the same understanding of the terminology and significance of the specific metrics.

The dashboards

Internal **dashboards** are a useful means to align people working towards strategic objectives and report results within an organization. They also allow in evaluating how the various digital activities are performing. Concerning the use of **Google Analytics,** in particular, consider creating specific dashboards inside the program. It is quite fascinating to learn who are the most visited artists and which objects gain the most attention.

Creating dashboards is all good and fine, but it is crucial to properly analyze and **interpret** the data.
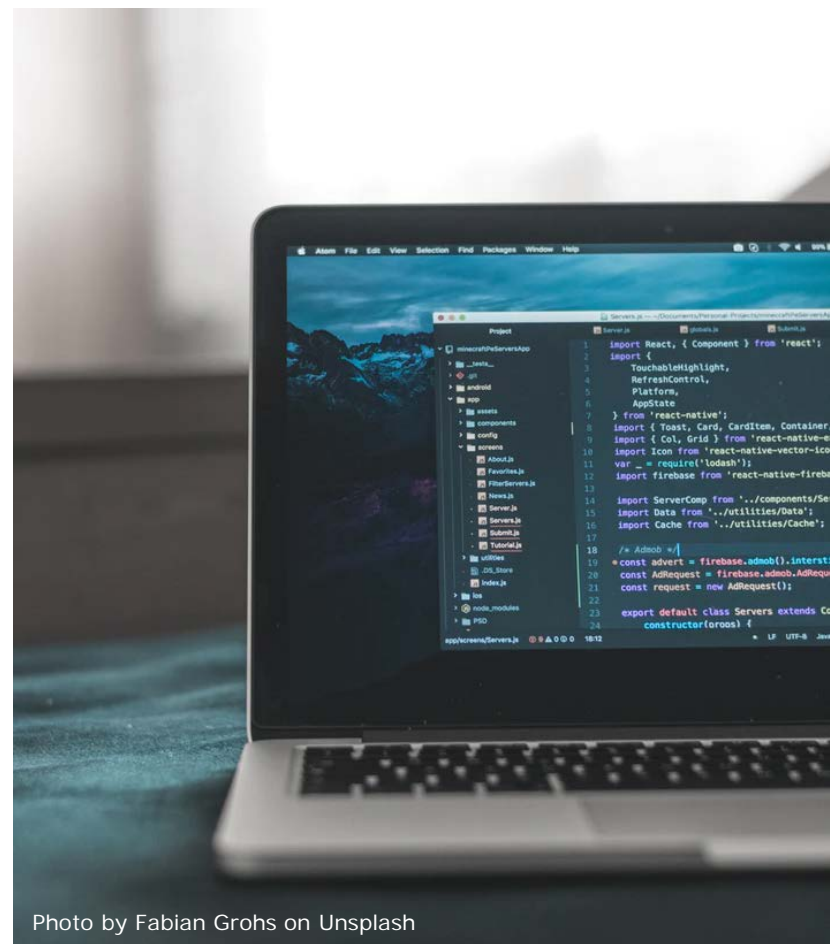

Photo by Fabian Grohs on Unsplash

![Mu.SA museum sector alliance] **Conclusions**

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Making choices is never a simple process, but it can be less risky if the basis is a careful analysis of the context and a correct interpretation of the data.

How many museums today have a **data analyst** in their team?

How much awareness is there of the importance of change and the forces that could hinder it?

These **reflections** should be the basis of any digital strategy in museums.
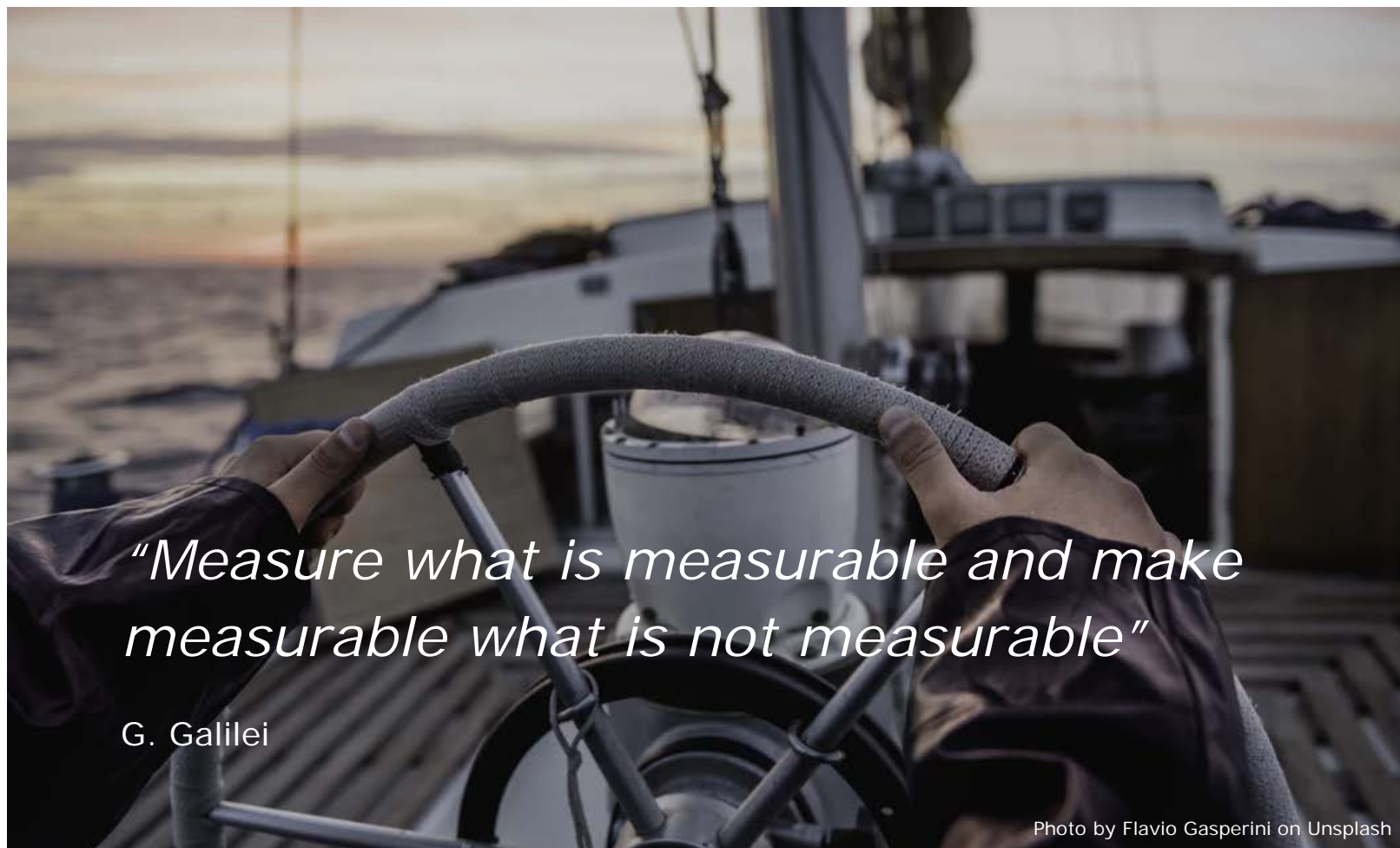
"Measure what is measurable and make measurable what is not measurable"

G. Galilei

Synopsis

This presentation is about the analytic approach in the decision-making process, through a deep analysis of the context and the right interpretation of data.

Now that you finished watching it, you should be able to:

- Recognize an analytical approach

- Develop a critical look on the topic

- Use the Force Field Analyze as a tool

- Identify phases, barriers, and tactics

- Become aware of the main steps to create a data-driven organization

List of references

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Presenter's bio page

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Elisa Cruciani is the Project Manager of a non-profit organization that, through the gamification support and the use of hands-on learning method, aims to help people to appreciate culture and recognize it as a value.

Her field of scientific interests are serious games and educational and learning methods with new technologies in Museums. She currently does researches in innovation and digital skills and she is planning a digital app for museum education.

She has been an assistant curator in some exhibitions in Italy, she has led a lot of touristic tours, she has a degree with honor in History of Art and a continuing education course in Management and Digitalization of Cultural Heritage.

Thank you for your attention!

Credits

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