



Visions of the Future

Creating from the future back



‘We have broken free and now see ourselves and our future very differently – which is refreshing, enlightening and a little bit scary’

What's different

Future back

Breaking free

A creative adventure

Strange attractor.

The need for a different approach

Too many times have we seen organisations try and innovate through their existing norms, filters and biases – which is generally a waste of time.

They also spend too much time looking down to fix short-term problems, as opposed to looking up to shape new futures – where some of those problems are no longer relevant.

Moreover, without a light at the end of the tunnel, people lose energy and motivation, and then all you can do is work harder and longer doing the same but a little bit differently.

So, how can we move beyond...

- incremental innovation upon incremental innovation – which is always easy for others to copy – and arguably isn't innovation?
- mindless and relentless copycatism – 'if they're doing it then so should we'?
- just relying on turning the handle faster and more aggressively?
- arguing for our limitations and about why it's too difficult to do something different?

It starts and ends with two
breakthrough questions...

What futures do you (your company/brand) **want to shape?**

And, **what is your unique role in making these futures happen?**



A different approach

Purpose-driven organisations stand out. Their anchor products, services and brands embody their purpose in superior and integrated user experiences. They develop two-way, loyal relationships with their customers. And they build commercial, digital and operational platforms that host, scale and connect these relationships, turning them into multi-directional communities of people and partners.

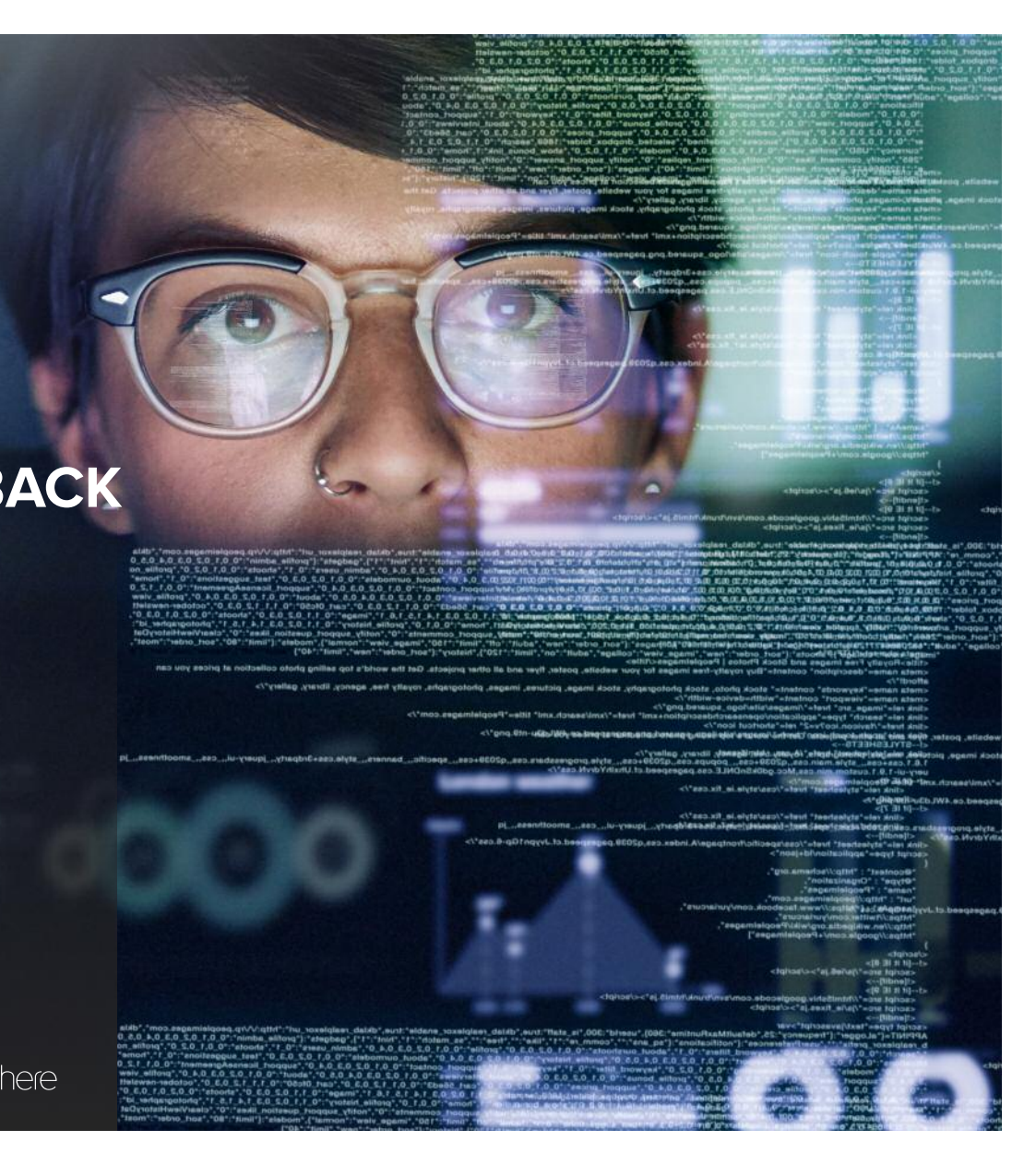
But to do all of this, **you need to become the strange attractor.** You need to proactively want to make a difference, and be able to express and embody that difference, so societies all over the world want to move towards you.

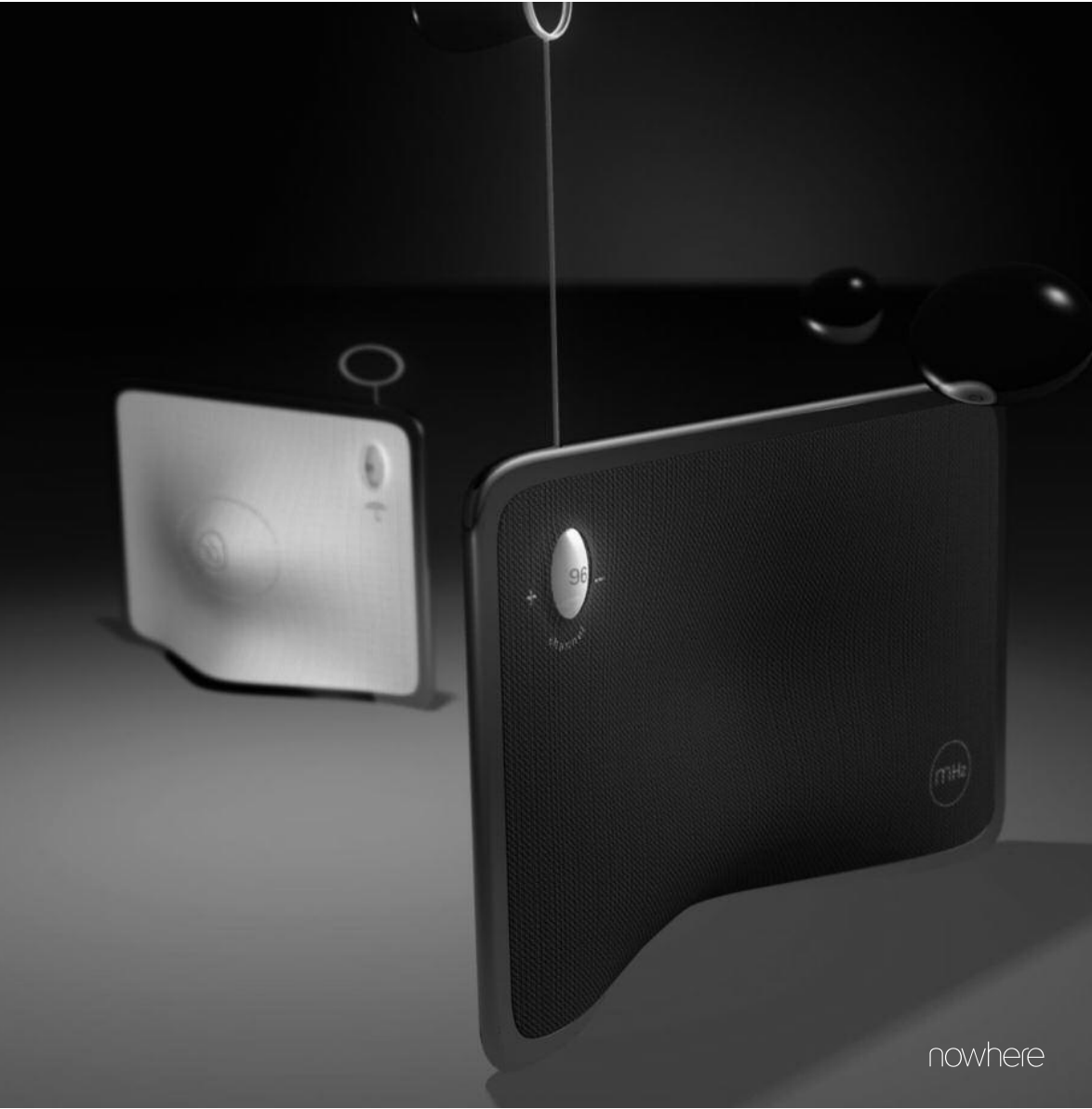
FUTURE BACK

Gone are the days of a static, end-state vision – the world is too volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous for that. By the time you understand where you are now (A) and then work out a finite destination you want to get to (B), both A and B will already be out of date.

But here's the dilemma. Doing more of the same but a little bit differently is no way to make the unmade future and to remain competitive, agile and innovative. **The challenge therefore is to learn how to leap into these unmade futures and innovate from the future back.**

nowhere





Moving towards something we want

Leaders often fall into the habit of talking too much about what they want to move away from, ie. problems like pollution, waste, product and patent cliffs, pricing pressures, market volatility; and talk too little about the futures they want to make and move towards.

The former is problem solving mentally; the latter is **a creative adventure** that you excite others to join you on.

nowhere

Breaking free

Building discontinuous visions (plural) of the future animated through potential new products, services, business models, places, senses of belonging, brands, processes, relationships, partnerships and platforms, is **a powerful way of breaking free of the mundane and the mediocre**. It also enlivens and challenges a 'system' to reinvent the future, step-by-step, innovation-by-innovation.

Importantly it interrupts the apathy that all organisations become victims of. It is, however, an art form to break-free from the ingrained habits, dominant belief systems, politics and power-plays that try at all costs to retain the status quo.

Calling forward the creative power of your organisation

Human beings come to life when they feel part of creating and building something. They lose energy and become entangled in distorted patterns of behaviour when they just feel like a cog in a machine.

Visions of the Future is an innovation methodology but with a difference, for it also:

- enables you to quest into and feel the future in embodied and immersive ways – giving you greater insight and foresight to help you navigate it
- opens and transforms the worldview of key leaders (as participants), such that they can more elegantly lead the organisation into the future
- generates visions and stories of the future that excite all of your key stakeholders about your expansive role, place and potential
- develops an ecology of breakthrough questions that calls the organisation forward to a higher order
- catalyses a wave of breakthrough innovations that accelerates you towards these future spaces, places, relationships and partnerships
- introduces more integrated ways of working around your current and future value drivers
- often delivers a series of meaningful quick wins
- helps you establish an ongoing culture of innovation

A creative adventure

This is a multi-phase process and practice, with step-by-step increases in reach and impact.

And yet, each phase offers distinctive value in its own right.

Phase 0: Building core energy

Phase 1: Co-creating visions of the future

Phase 2: Becoming the strange attractor

Phase 3: Catalysing a wave of breakthrough innovations





Phase 0

Building core energy

Don't pass go until you have built a senior coalition – a small, core group of people who have the courage to do something different, and the remit to do so.

Ironically this is the hardest and most difficult phase, as a system will often find every reason not to do it. The most common reason being we don't have time.

Really!!

Being time poor is the biggest red flag for needing to do something different. But it is also the greatest killer of breakthrough innovation.

By definition this work is disruptive (not distractive), and needs conviction, passion, strength and foresight to lead it into and through the various phases.



Phase 1

Co-creating visions of the future

It starts with a small creative team, below the radar. This team can be purely internal, or can be a mix of key internal stakeholders and experts, and external wisdom holders.

This team is then held through an initial **four step process**:

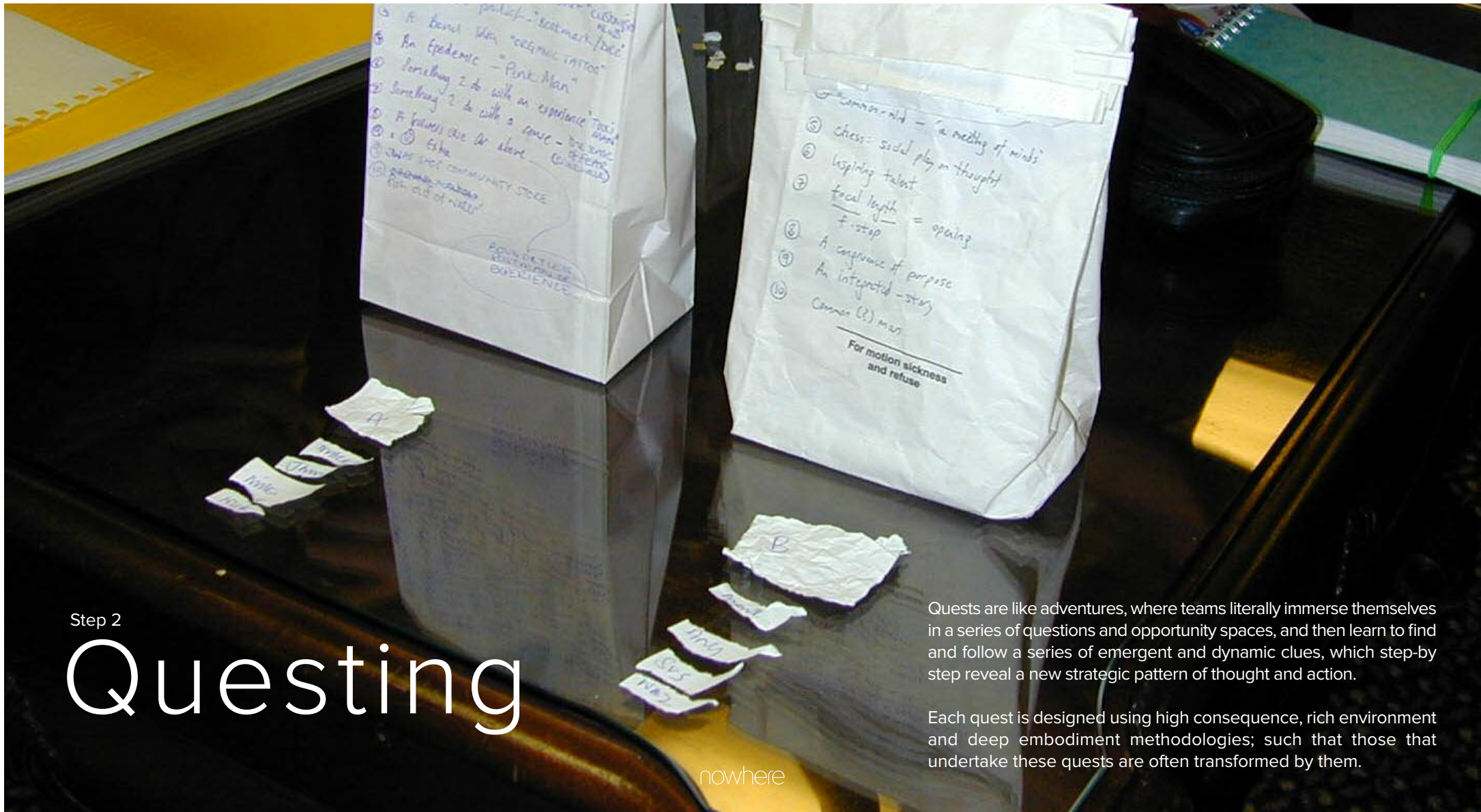


Step 1

Onboarding

This first step onboards the team to the challenge, to each other and to the process and practice. Their first piece of work is to research and saturate themselves in the 'known' so any and all preconceptions and assumptions (theirs and others') can be put on the table.

This interrupts any game-playing and hidden agendas, and prepares them to leap. This stage also identifies a set of initial clues and breakthrough questions (often not expected) that they want to start questing into.



Step 2

Questing

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Quests are like adventures, where teams literally immerse themselves in a series of questions and opportunity spaces, and then learn to find and follow a series of emergent and dynamic clues, which step-by-step reveal a new strategic pattern of thought and action.

Each quest is designed using high consequence, rich environment and deep embodiment methodologies; such that those that undertake these quests are often transformed by them.



Step 3

Illumination

Following a series of quests, the creative team then starts to make meaning of them. This is a process of chunking, blending and binding to allow new patterns and blueprints of the future to emerge. They need to be on-purpose, and embody futures that you would be excited to shape and make, and put your name to.

Step 4

Seeking Counsel

Through Steps 1-3 the creative team stay in intimate relationship with the core team, whose role is to open doors, and encourage them to push into the boundaries of possibility and performance. But at this point the creative team need to test their 'work in progress' and seek counsel from them. This is a check-point, designed itself to be a creative intervention, that helps the most beautiful insights and patterns of possibility to rise, and those great ideas that are not of the same quality and resonance to drop away.

Phase 2

Becoming the strange attractor

Next the work moves into the storytelling phase. This is where the work is animated as visions of the future the company believes they would love to shape and make happen.

These visions can take many forms, to suit different stakeholders and platforms, and are illustrated and brought to life through ecologies of innovations.

They are best shared in embodied and experiential ways, allowing people to literally step into, touch and feel the future.

This phase often unlocks a whole new wave of organisational energy, belief and commitment – itself a massive asset. It also attracts new partners to turn up and knock on your door.



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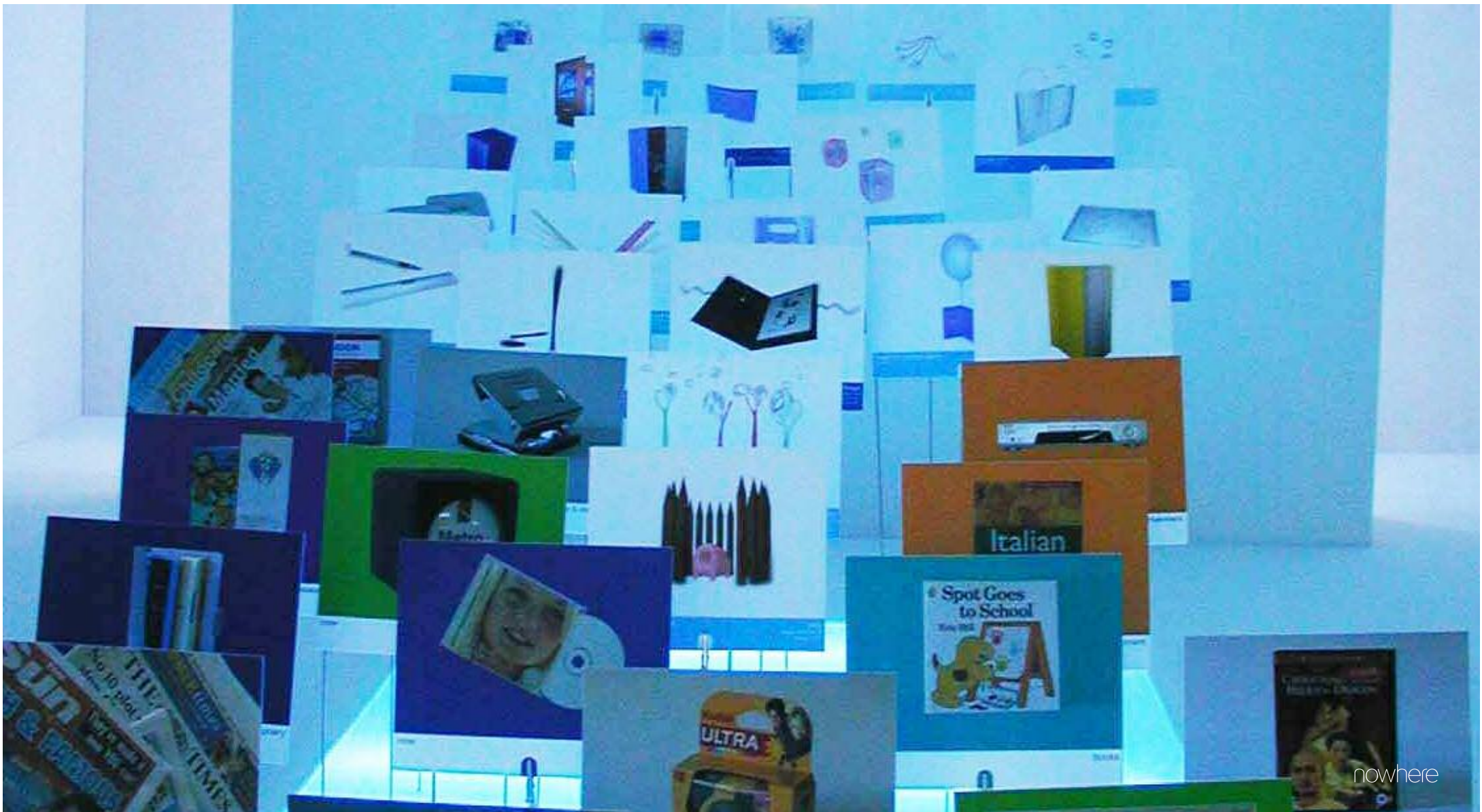


Phase **3**

Catalysing a wave of breakthrough innovations

This is then the time to use these visions of the future to call the organisation forward. Maybe not all at once, but through targeted and sequenced challenges to different parts of the business.

How can they use these visions of the future, and the blueprints that underpin them, to reinvent their business unit, category or function, with a series of breakthrough innovations?



nowhere

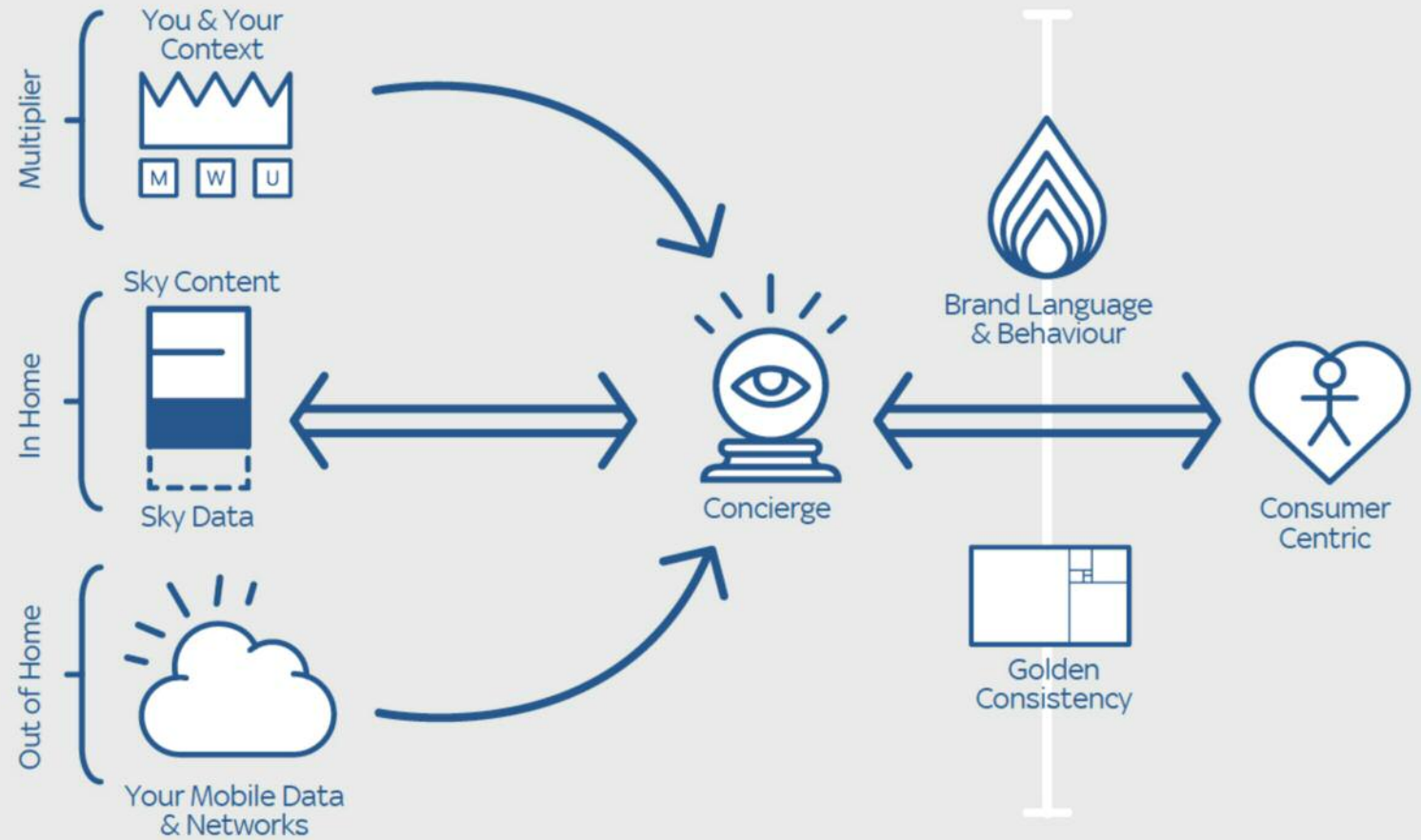


Collaboratory

To help them do this we introduce them to the 'collaboratory', a **nowhere** methodology that uses deep understanding of human process design, and a unique knowledge of the creative process (at both an individual and collective level), to build core teams, and communities of creative teams, around breakthrough questions, rapid prototyping, and scaling and replicating. This organic ecosystem approach to innovation is infinitely more effective and efficient than the pyramidal use of expert teams, governed by hierarchical steering groups and committees.

This breakthrough methodology is not only replicable but also scalable, and can also be used as a wider blueprint for innovating within, across and between all of your core value drivers.

This is how your organisation learns to tap into the 'hum' – where it feels on-purpose, and in creative and productive flow. And this is where you personally and organisationally surprise yourself with how far you have leapt and how differently you now work.



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