From Wardley Map to Backlog

My Background

Principal Consultant
- Agile Methodology
- Org. Design & Cultural Change

Agile Experience
- Certified LeSS Trainer
- Scrum Trainer

Software Development Experience
- 20+ years
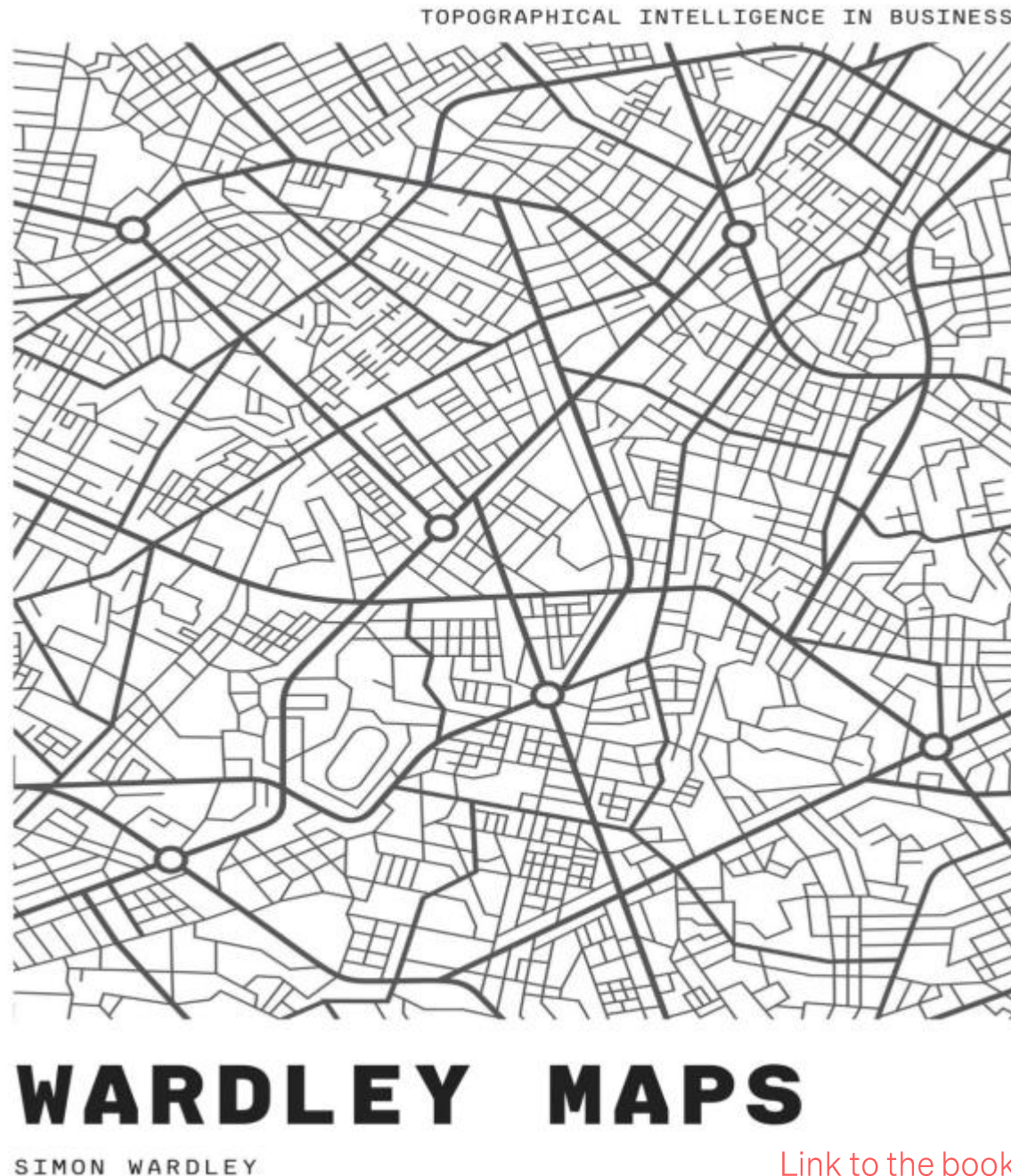- C++, Java, JavaScript, Python, ...

Business Areas
- Automotive
- Insurance
- Retail and E-Commerce

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Wardley Maps

TOPOGRAPHICAL INTELLIGENCE IN BUSINESS

WARDLEY MAPS

SIMON WARDLEY

[Link to the book](#)

- Product Thinking
- Product Development
- Strategic Thinking
- Intelligence in Business

- Projecting thoughts into the future
- Uncertainty by design
- Trying to accomplish business success

Perfect fit for Agile Product Development

Situation On Display

context of the example in the upcoming slides

Simon: We were an online photo service, a consultancy, a European CRM, an Identity web service, a fulfilment engine and an assortment of special projects around 3D printing and the use of mobiles phones as cameras. *I had no real way of determining which we should focus on* and hence the purpose was a compromise of doing everything.

Simon: When I had taken over the company a few years earlier, we were losing money hand over fist, we had to borrow significant sums to stay afloat because we were on our way out. In reality our purpose had been simply "to survive".

Simon: In the next few years we had turned this around, we had become highly profitable, we had paid back the loans and had a million or so in the bank and we were growing.

Don't Start With the End
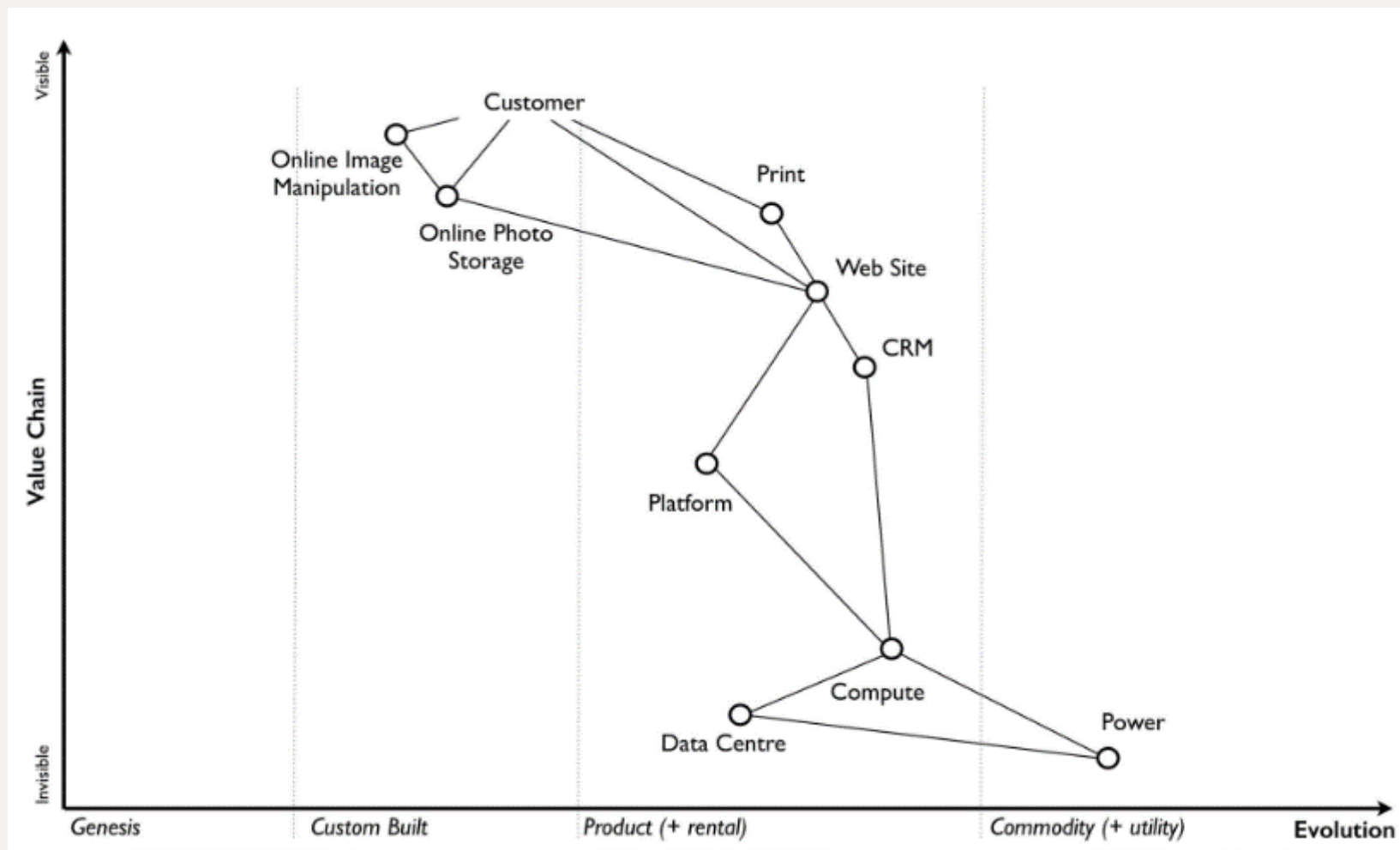
The map is powerful for orientation – it is essential – but **if you try to start from the end, you start from the worst position**.
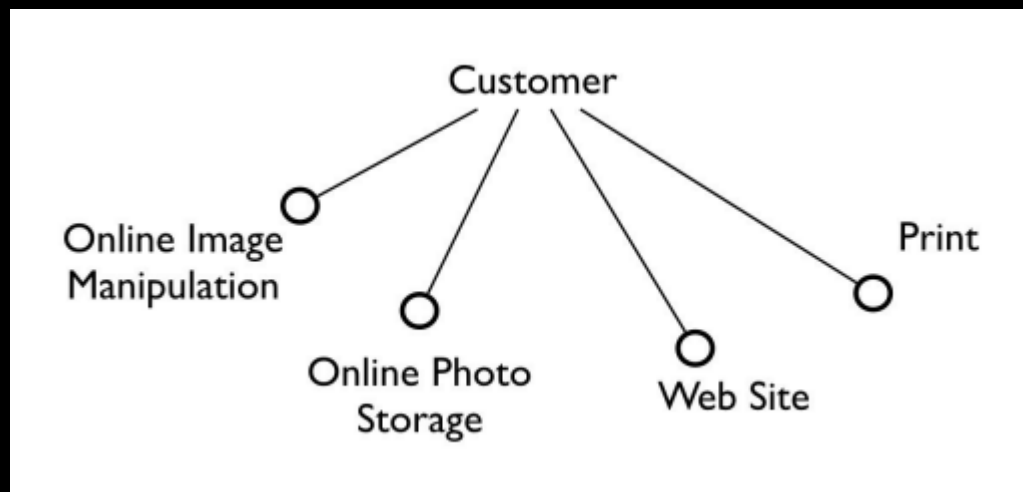
- If you start from the end, you implicitly assume perfect knowledge and no change.
- You limit yourself by inability to react and adjust.

Start With Needs

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Step 1 "User Needs"

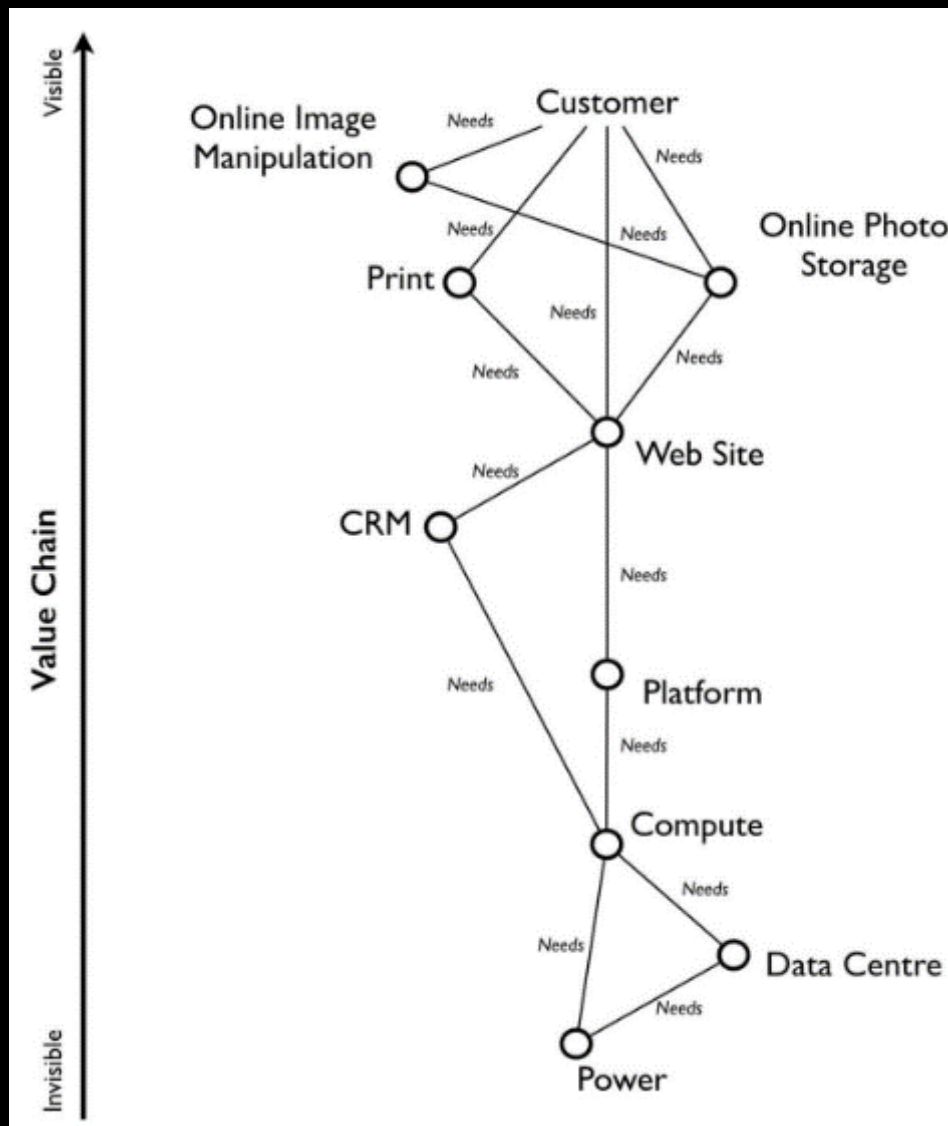
- Know your customer.

- Know your context.

- Notice:
  - **Follow the money!**
  - There is nothing internal.

Continue With Understanding Relations
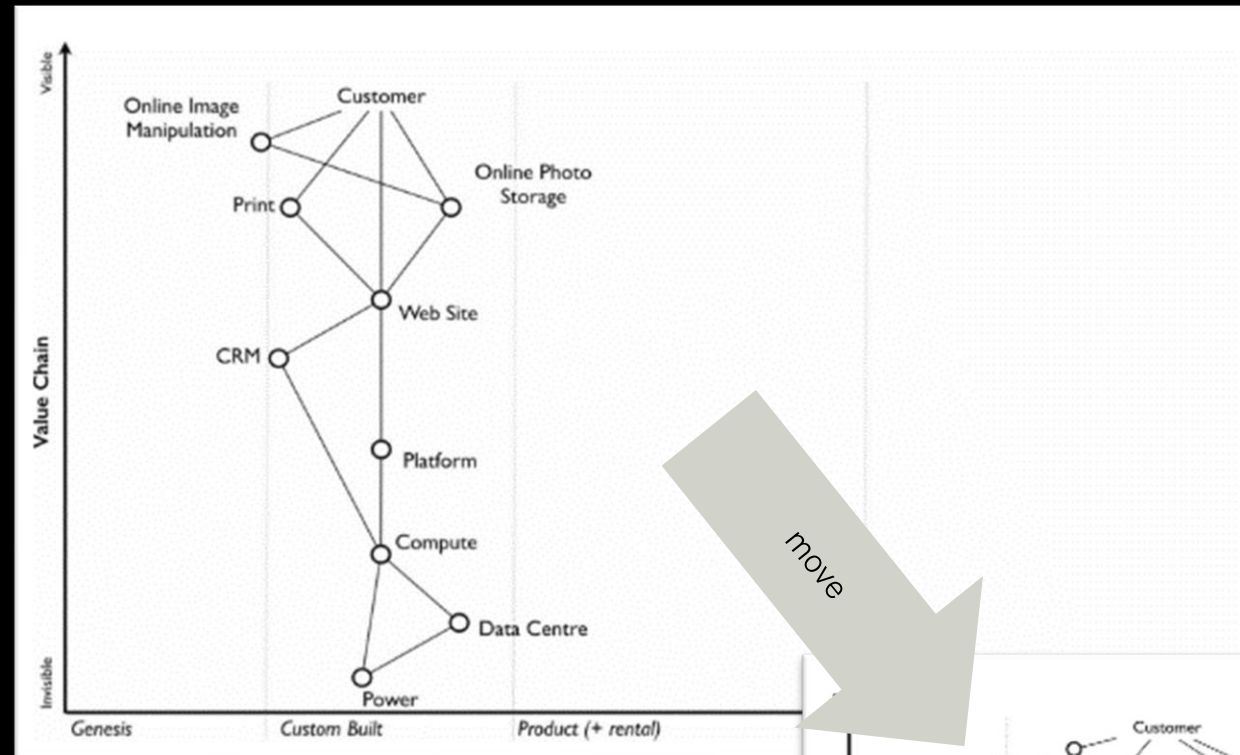
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Step 2 "Value Chain"

- Understand and visualize what is driving value for your customer.

- No noun drives the flow of value.

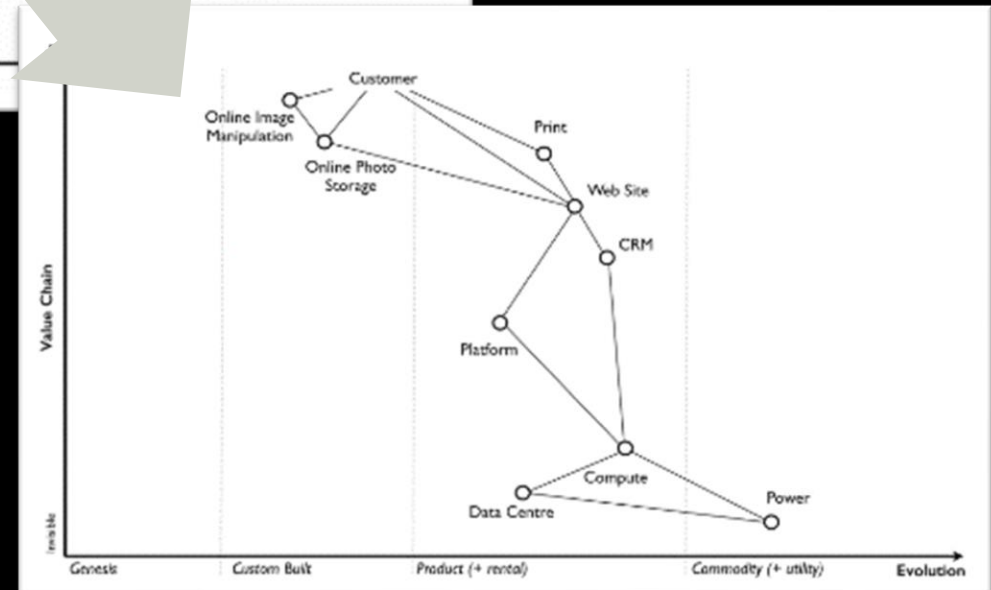- Only relations, collaborations, interactions, and reasons drive value.

- Notice:
  - **Focus on "needs".**
  - Ignoring timelines, deadlines, and release plans.
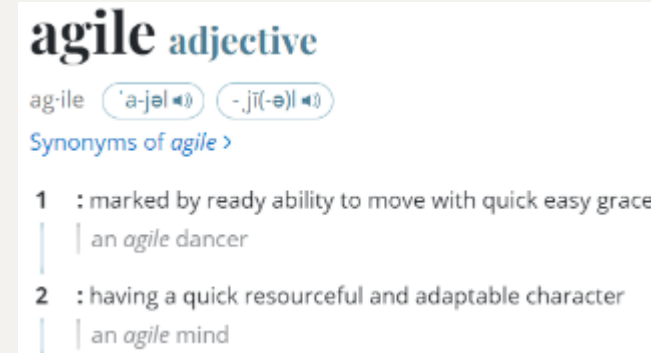
Initial Placing And Moving

- For this slide:
  - Ignore constrains, inertia barrier, barriers, …

How Agile Comes Into Play

merriam-webster →

Nothing about
- User Story
- T-Shirt Sizes
- PI
- …

- The very core of "Agile" is the ability to response to change.
- The very core of "Agile" is the ability to pursue beneficial product development.
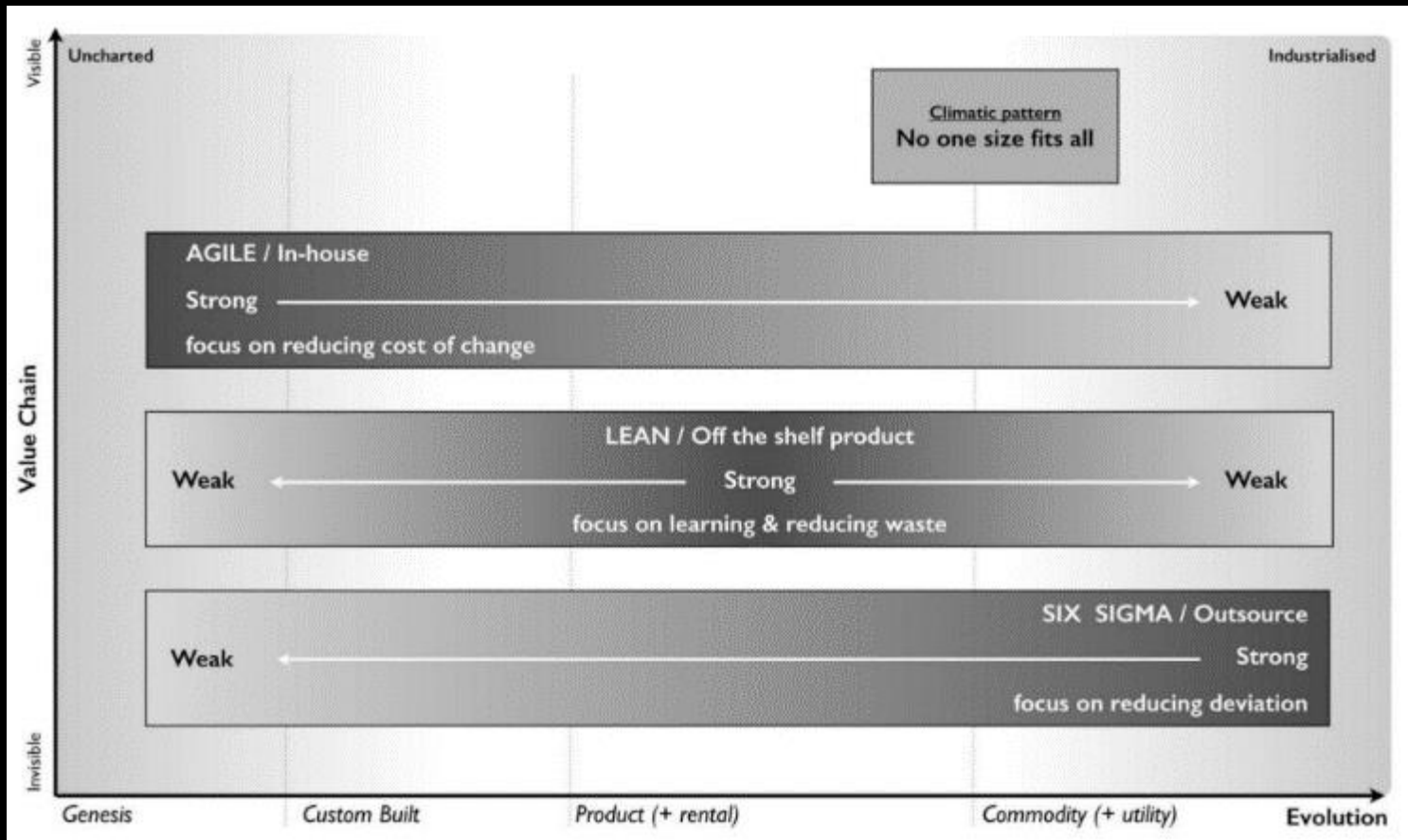
Therefore:
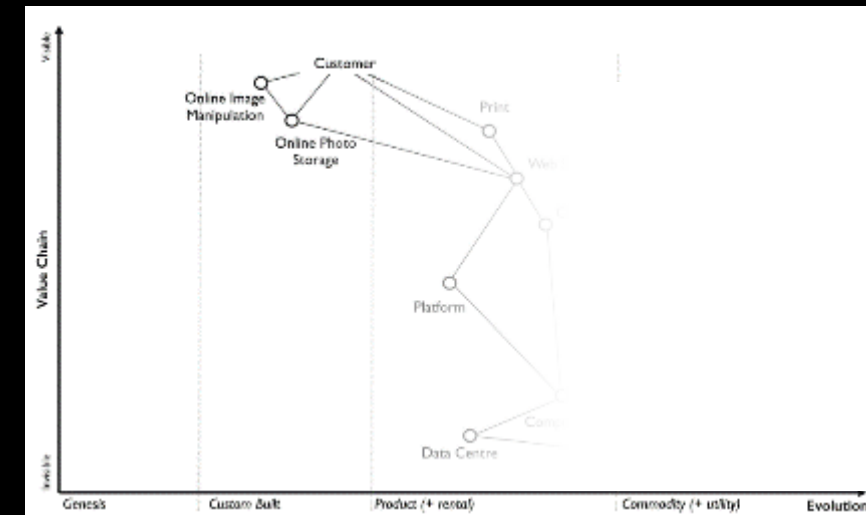- Perfect match for strategy product re-alignment.

Design principle of

Where
Wardley Map
Calls for Agility

"Genesis" and "Custom Built"

- Focus effort on the portions that matters and differentiate from competition.

- Start with step 1
  - Know what your customer needs.

- Followed by step 2
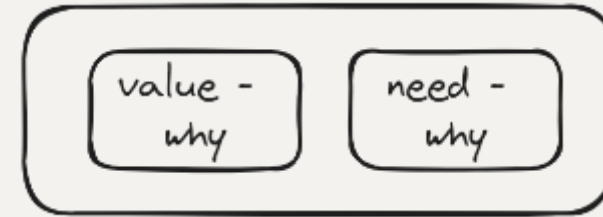 - Understand which value is generated for the customer by the provided.

- Notice:
  - **We start the Product Backlog by Understanding**.
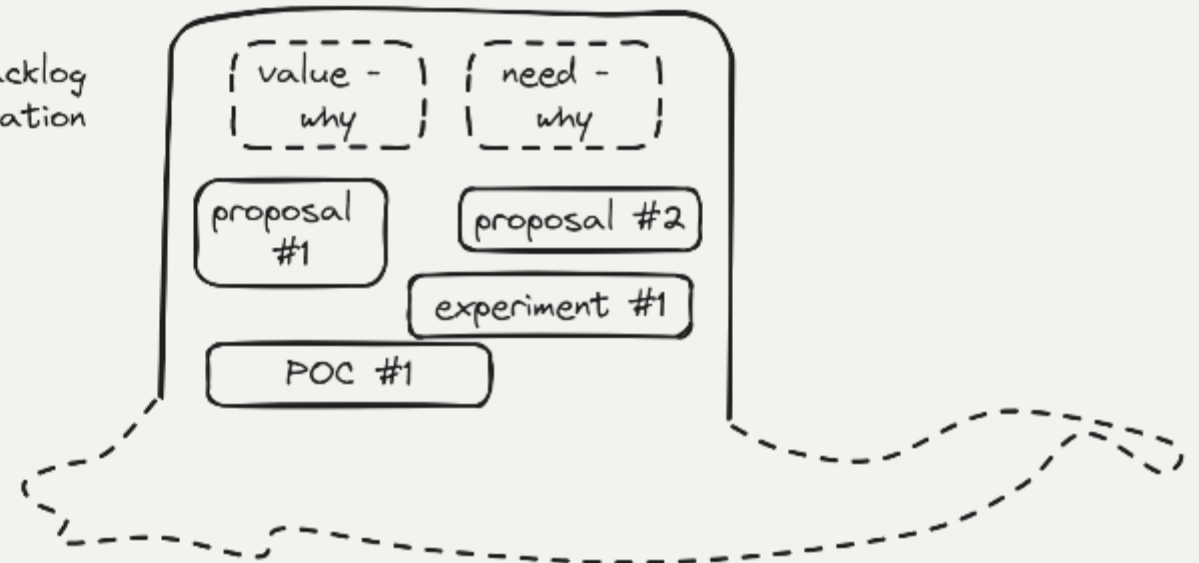 - We start the Backlog by **learning** the value proposition.

The Beginning: Product Backlog

Product Backlog
First Iteration

- The team *learns* "Why".

- The team *learns* how "Value" is generated for the customer.

- This is called: **Product Backlog Refinement**.

- There are no chicken in a refinement!

Product Backlog
"Next" Iteration

Always Keep in Mind

- In each Product Backlog Refinement:
  - Know your customer.
  - Know the "why" for the "need".
  - Know the value.

- Each Product Backlog Item:
  - Is a problem statement to resolve.
  - Is a challenge to master.
  - Is an increment to deliver.
  - (Deliver means to the customer; not PO, or PMO, or "it is here on my branch")

- Naturally – you are in a constant verification of your strategic decision:
  - You *explore* the most "valuable" things first.
  - You *deliver* the most "valuable" things first.

- Notice:
  - The Product Backlog and Sprint Backlogs are **conceptionally different things**.

Mapping to Attitudes
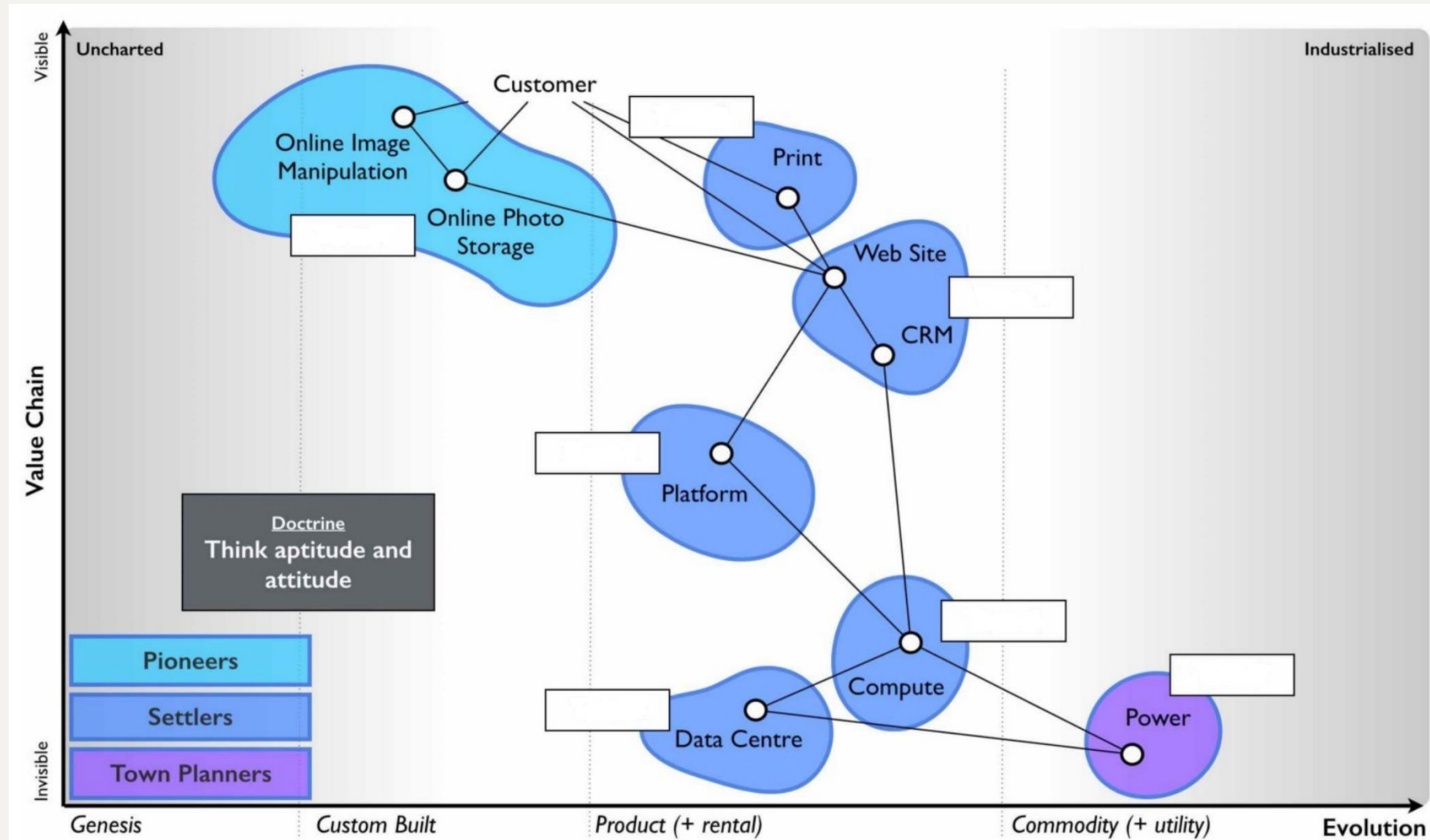
Conclusion

- Wardley Maps – by its focus on strategy – explore "value" first.

- Agile – by its focus on learning – explores problem space first (understanding), followed by delivery (learning from experiments).

- Exploring "is the delivery meeting the value" is second-nature for Wardley-Map practitioner.

- Every "agile"-painted process/framework/implementation not emphasis learning the value or understanding the value or understanding the customer, is not Agile.

- No Agile process plans until the end in full detail. This would contradict the basic concept of the "Strategic Product Thinking" approach of Wardley Map.

- Collecting all Sprint Backlogs into a single Backlog doesn't result in a Product Backlog.