



# The enterprise is a story

*a narrative approach to enterprise-architecture*

Tom Graves, Tetradian Consulting  
Integrated EA Conference, London, March 2012

**“What’s the story?”**



(a favourite book)

# “Two points of view on architecture”

- **Architecture is an exercise in truth**

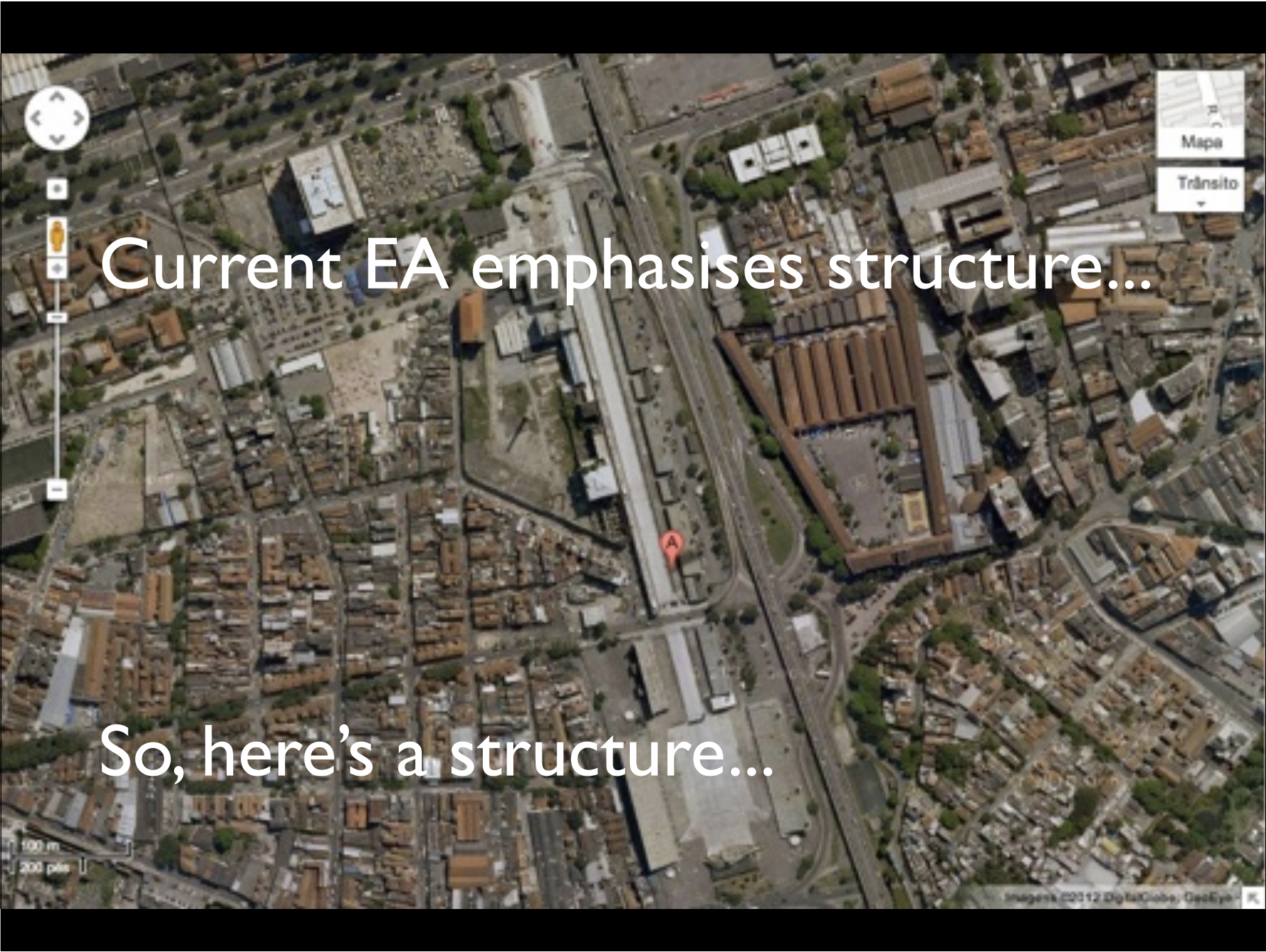
A proper building is responsible to universal knowledge and is wholly honest in the expression of its functions and materials

- **Architecture is an exercise in narrative**

Architecture is a vehicle for the telling of stories, a canvas for relaying societal myths, a stage for the theatre of everyday life

## Another way to view this...


- Architecture is an exercise in **truth**
  - *architecture is about **structure***
- Architecture is an exercise in **narrative**
  - *architecture is about **story***

An aerial satellite view of a city, likely in Brazil, showing a dense urban area with many small buildings and a few larger industrial or commercial structures. A red pin with the letter 'A' is placed on a long, narrow building. The image includes standard Google Maps interface elements: a compass and navigation controls on the left, a 'Mapa' and 'Trânsito' (Traffic) button on the top right, and a scale bar (100m, 200 pixels) in the bottom left. A copyright notice 'Imagens ©2012 DigitalGlobe, GeoEye' is visible in the bottom right corner.

Current EA emphasises structure...

So, here's a structure...





# The Sambadrome, in Rio de Janeiro...

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Which, on its own,  
doesn't really tell us anything...

That's the problem with structure.

To make sense of a structure,  
we need the story...



...in this case, the story of Carnaval.



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In this city, a huge shared-story...



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Full of colour, sound, spectacle...



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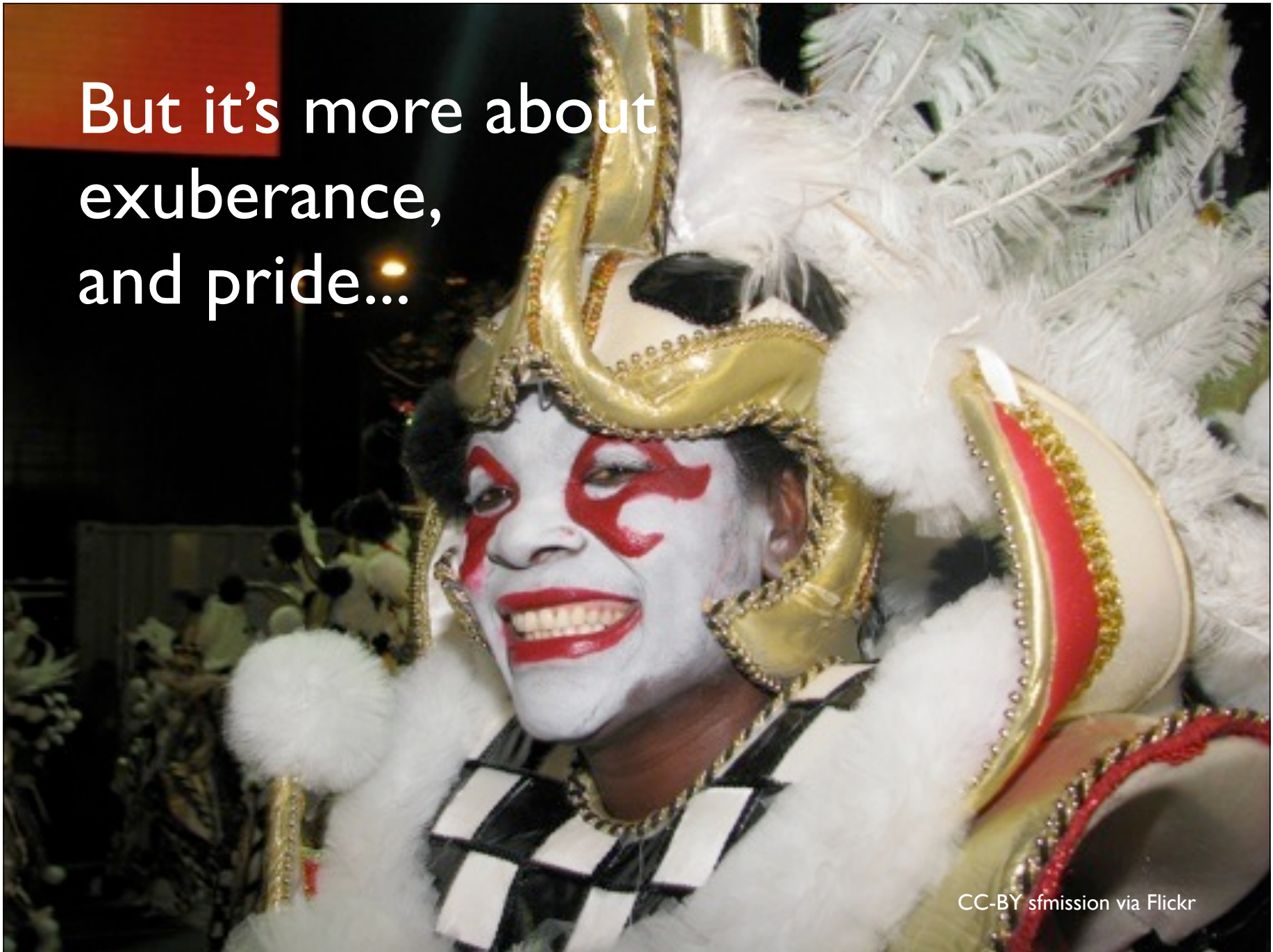
...and occasional extremes...



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But it's more about  
exuberance,  
and pride...



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The young(er)...





The old(er)...



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The whole community...



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And if a line-up like this...



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Might remind you of this...



CC-BY bobaliciouslondon via Flickr





...do remember  
to keep track  
of the story?



Yet when the party's over,  
and it's time to head home...



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Someone must be there to clean up..  
- because that's part of the story too.




CC-BY otubo via Flickr

Process, assets, data, locations....  
- all the usual structure-stuff...  
...all those necessary details  
of organisation.







Organisation focusses on structure,

CC-BY Avodrocc via Flickr

yet the enterprise is the story.




CC-BY Boban021 via Flickr



An aerial satellite view of a city, likely in Brazil, showing a dense urban area with many small buildings and a prominent railway line running diagonally through the center. A red location pin with the letter 'A' is placed on the railway line. The image includes standard Google Maps interface elements: a compass and navigation controls on the top left, a scale bar (100m, 200 feet) on the bottom left, and a map/transit toggle on the top right. The text 'The structure happens because of the story.' is overlaid in white, with the word 'because' underlined.

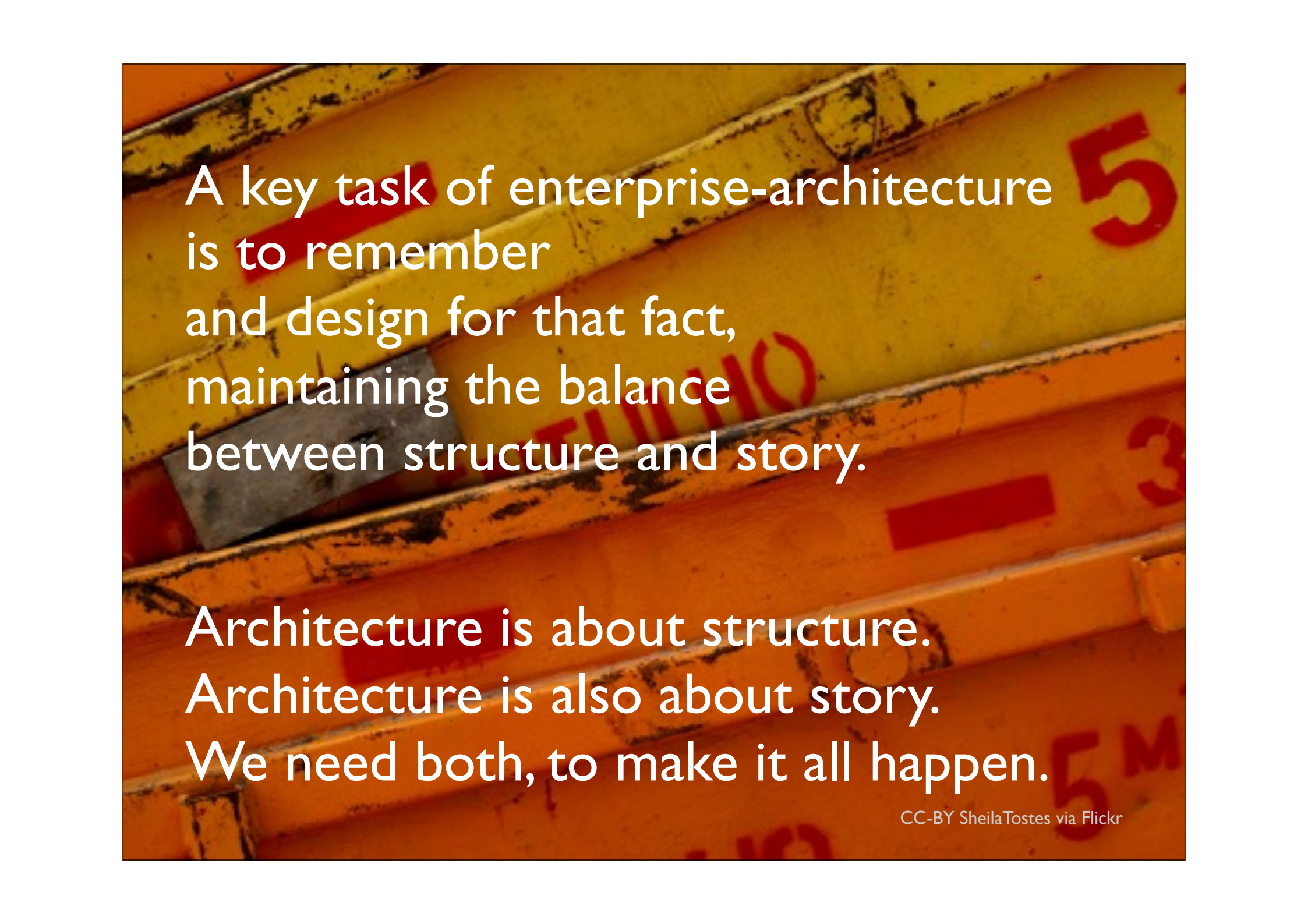
The structure happens  
because of the story.



An aerial satellite image of a densely populated urban area, likely in Brazil, showing a mix of residential buildings and industrial structures. A railway line runs diagonally through the center of the image. A red location pin with the letter 'A' is placed on the railway line. The image includes standard Google Maps interface elements: a compass and navigation controls on the left, a 'Mapa' and 'Trânsito' (Traffic) menu on the right, and a scale bar in the bottom left corner. A copyright notice for DigitalGlobe and GeoEye is visible in the bottom right corner.

Structures may be re-used  
for other stories,  
but the structure itself  
is not the story.





A key task of enterprise-architecture  
is to remember  
and design for that fact,  
maintaining the balance  
between structure and story.

Architecture is about structure.  
Architecture is also about story.  
We need both, to make it all happen.

**“A cast of thousands!”**



# Whose architecture?



A word cloud of stakeholders in the Carnival story. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with some words oriented vertically. The colors of the words range from dark red to light yellow. The words include: entertainment, tourist-board, escola-da-samba, drink-vendors, government, tourists, health-services, local-communities, emergency-services, police, embassies, grey-economy, civic-services, pickpockets, airlines, pimps, roads, hotels, anti-clients, scammers, public-transport, and food-vendors.

Some of the 'cast' - stakeholders - in the Carnival story.

# Whose architecture?

“An architecture  
describes ***structure***  
to support a shared-***story***.”

Tom Graves, *The Enterprise As Story*, Tetradian, 2012

Organisation aligns with *structure*, enterprise with *story*.  
We need a balance of both for the architecture to work.



# Whose architecture?

“We create an architecture  
**for** an ***organisation***,  
but **about** an ***enterprise***.”

Tom Graves, *Mapping the Enterprise*, Tetradian, 2010

Organisation aligns with *structure*, enterprise with *story*.  
We need a balance of both for the architecture to work.

# Whose architecture?

“An **organisation** is bounded by rules, roles and responsibilities;  
an **enterprise** is bounded by vision, values and commitments.”

Tom Graves, *Mapping the Enterprise*, Tetradian, 2010

Organisation aligns with *structure*, enterprise with *story*.  
We need a balance of both for the architecture to work.



# Whose architecture?

## ***A useful guideline:***

“The enterprise in scope should be three steps larger than the organisation in scope.”

# Whose story?



If the organisation says it 'is' the enterprise,  
there's no shared-story - and often, no story at all.

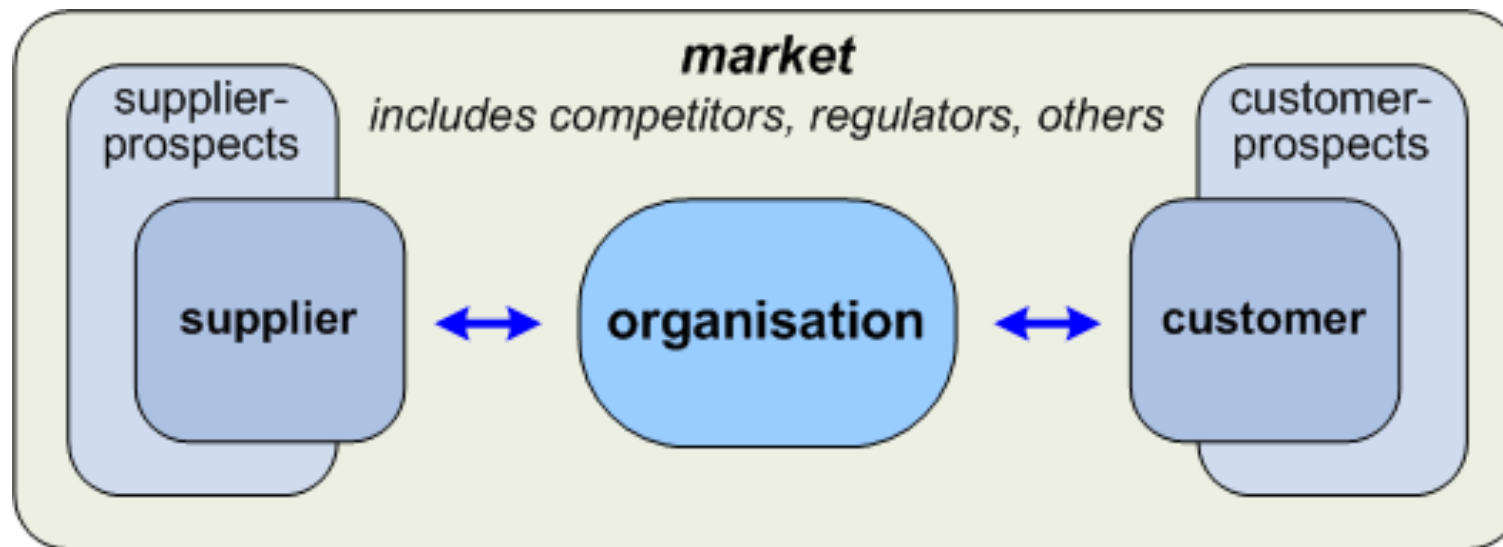


# Whose story?



The minimum real enterprise is the supply-chain  
- a story of shared transactions.

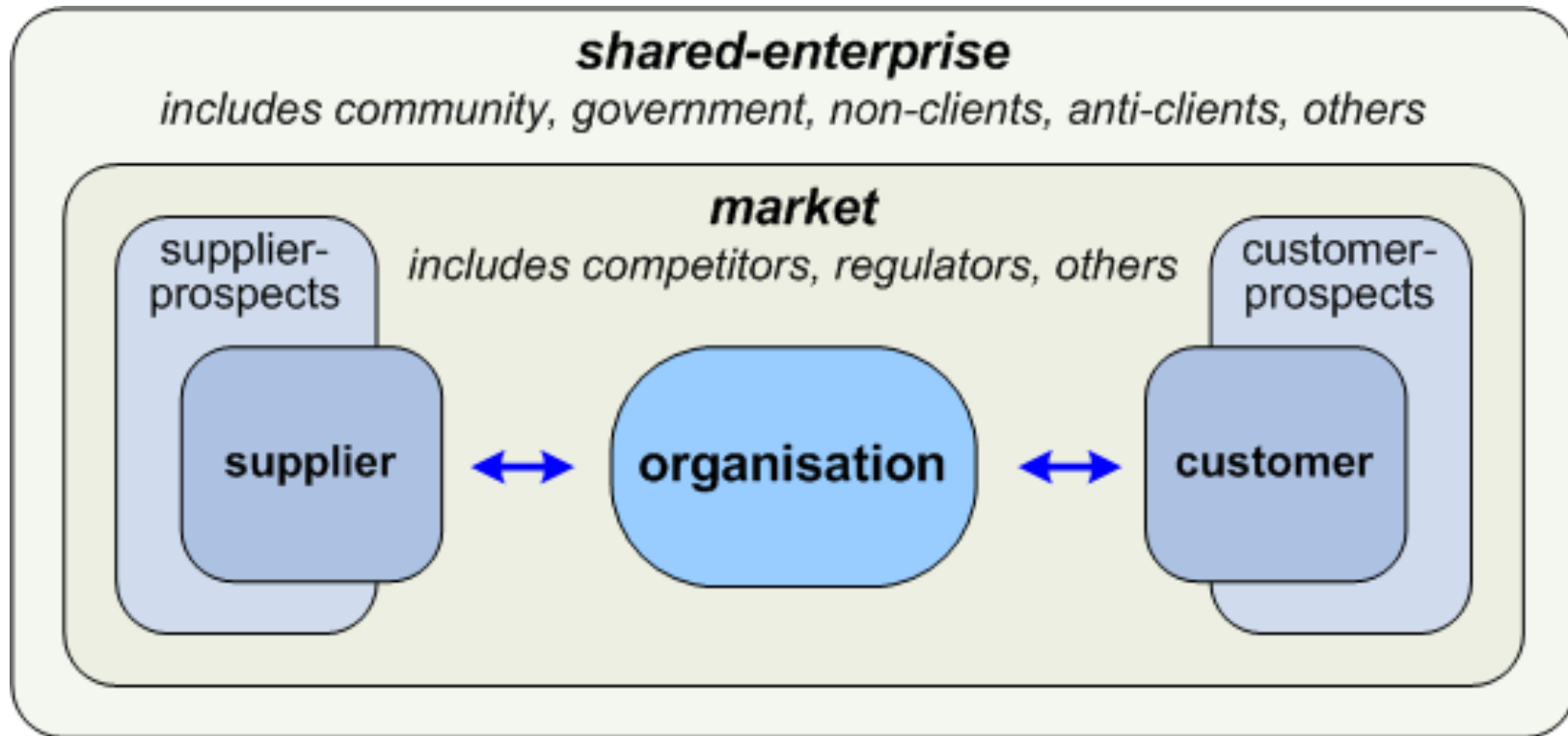
# Whose story?



The organisation and enterprise of the supply-chain take place within a broader organisation of the market.



# Whose story?



The market itself exists within a context of 'intangible' interactions with the broader shared-enterprise story.

# Whose story?

“Customers do not appear  
in our processes...  
...we appear in their  
experiences.”

Chris Potts, *recrEAtion*, Technics, 2010

We must create the architecture around the shared-story  
- not solely around our organisation's structures.



# Whose enterprise?



A word cloud of various stakeholders in the Carnival enterprise. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with some words oriented vertically. The colors of the words range from dark red to light yellow. The words include: entertainment, tourist-board, escola-da-samba, drink-vendors, government, tourists, health-services, local-communities, emergency-services, police, embassies, grey-economy, civic-services, pickpockets, airlines, pimps, roads, hotels, anti-clients, scammers, public-transport, and food-vendors.

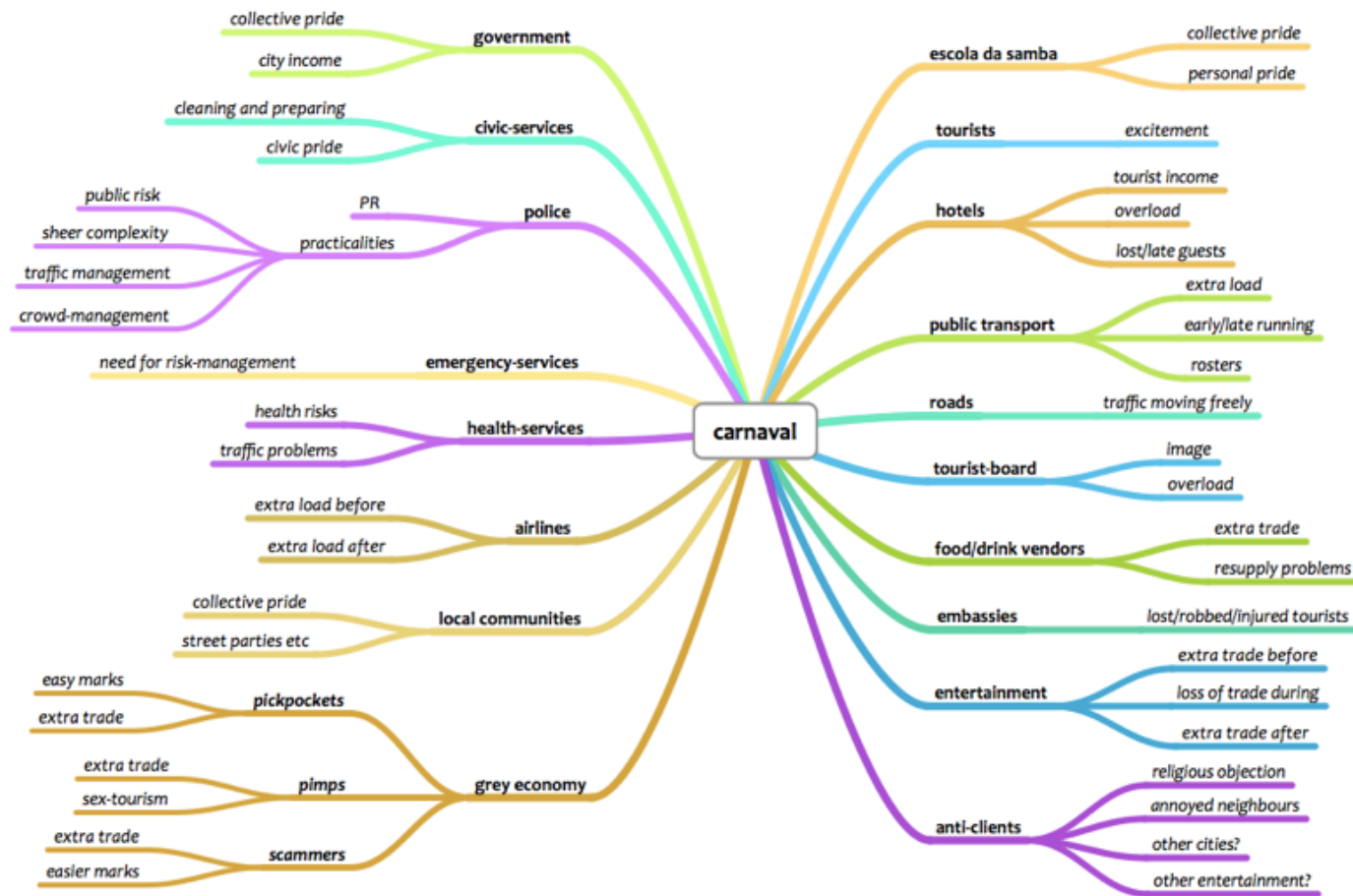
All of these are stakeholders in the enterprise of Carnaval.

# Whose enterprise?

- We choose to align with an enterprise
- We do not possess that enterprise  
(if anything, it possesses us...)
- We have our own business-values, but those values *must* uphold the enterprise-values
- *Note:* values are not necessarily monetary  
(for Carnival, a monetary focus may destroy enterprise-values of pride and community)



# Whose enterprise?



Stakeholders and their respective business-drivers.

# Whose enterprise?

- Each player is in relation with all other players  
(relation may be indirect, but always exists)
- Players whose values align most closely with the enterprise-values should take the lead
- Grey-economy is parasitic to Carnaval
- Anti-clients may share overall vision  
(but disagree with us on how it should be achieved)



**“The plot thickens...”**

# Plot and process

“Process is the use of **structure**  
(the *organisation* view)

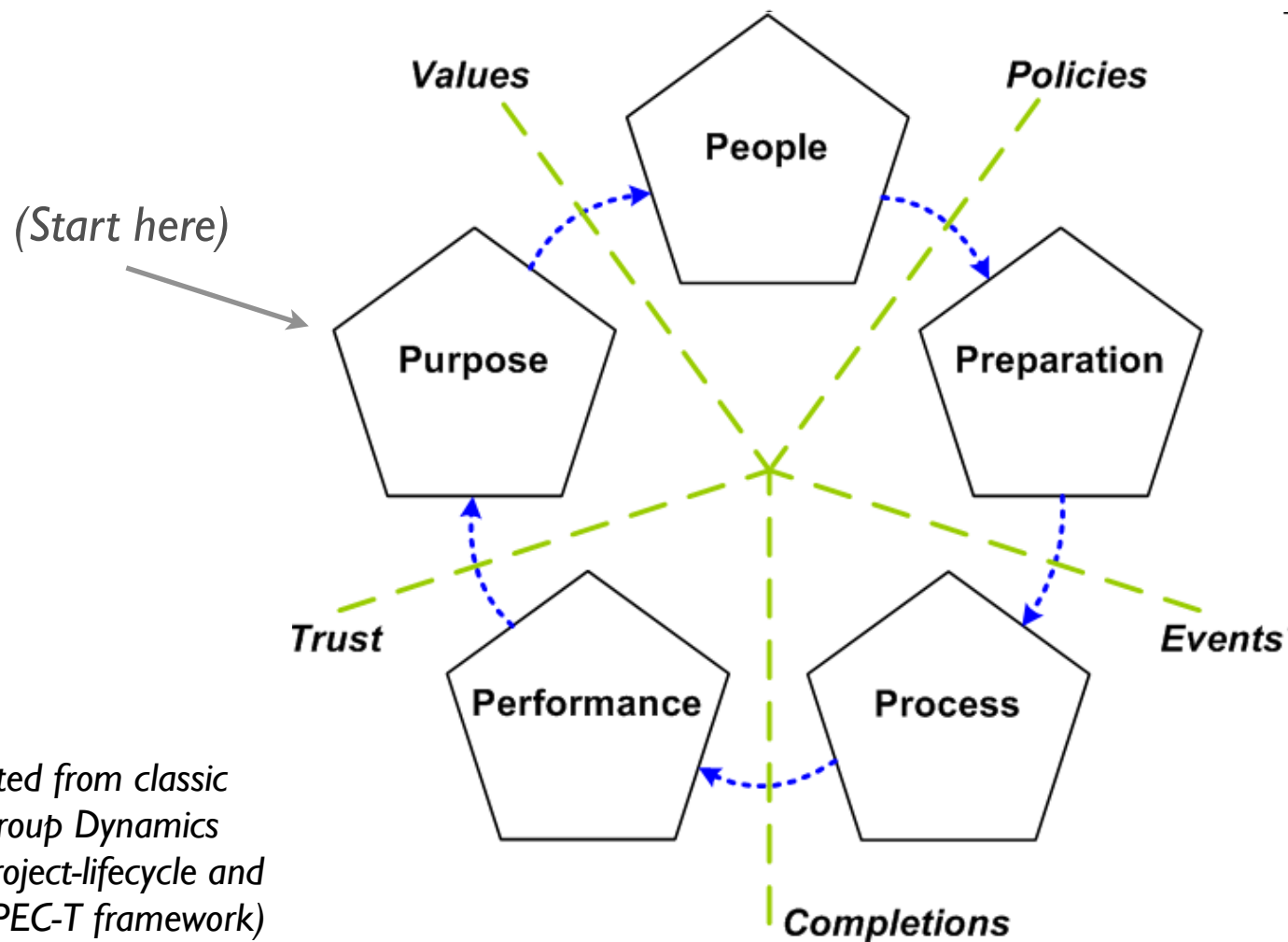
Plot is the unfolding of **story**  
(the *enterprise* view)”

# Process as story

“Each traverse through  
a business-process  
is a *self-contained story*  
with its own actors, actions  
and events”



# The story-cycle



(adapted from classic  
Group Dynamics  
project-lifecycle and  
VPEC-T framework)

# Where's the story?

**“Story is everywhere  
in enterprise-architecture  
(once you know where to look)”**

process-volume...



CC-BY AllBrazilian via Wikimedia



capability-  
development...



O MOVIMENTO  
DO SAMBA

Nintendo

O Wii está presente nos Carnavais do Rio de Janeiro e de São Paulo, fazendo muita festa em um camarote exclusivo, liberado para todas as idades com muitos jogos que sua família vai adorar.

Não deixe de fazer parte do Movimento do Samba. Saiba como adquirir o seu ingresso no site: [br.wii.com](http://br.wii.com)

Se quiser  
o ingresso  
é grátis?

Entre  
Wii  
no  
MUNDO

QR code

business-scenario...







use-case...



resource-management...



CC-BY fairfaxcounty via Flickr

exchange-protocol...





transaction...



CC-BY Jack Zalium via Flickr



governance...

CC-BY Alicia Nijdam via Flickr

system-overload...



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standards...

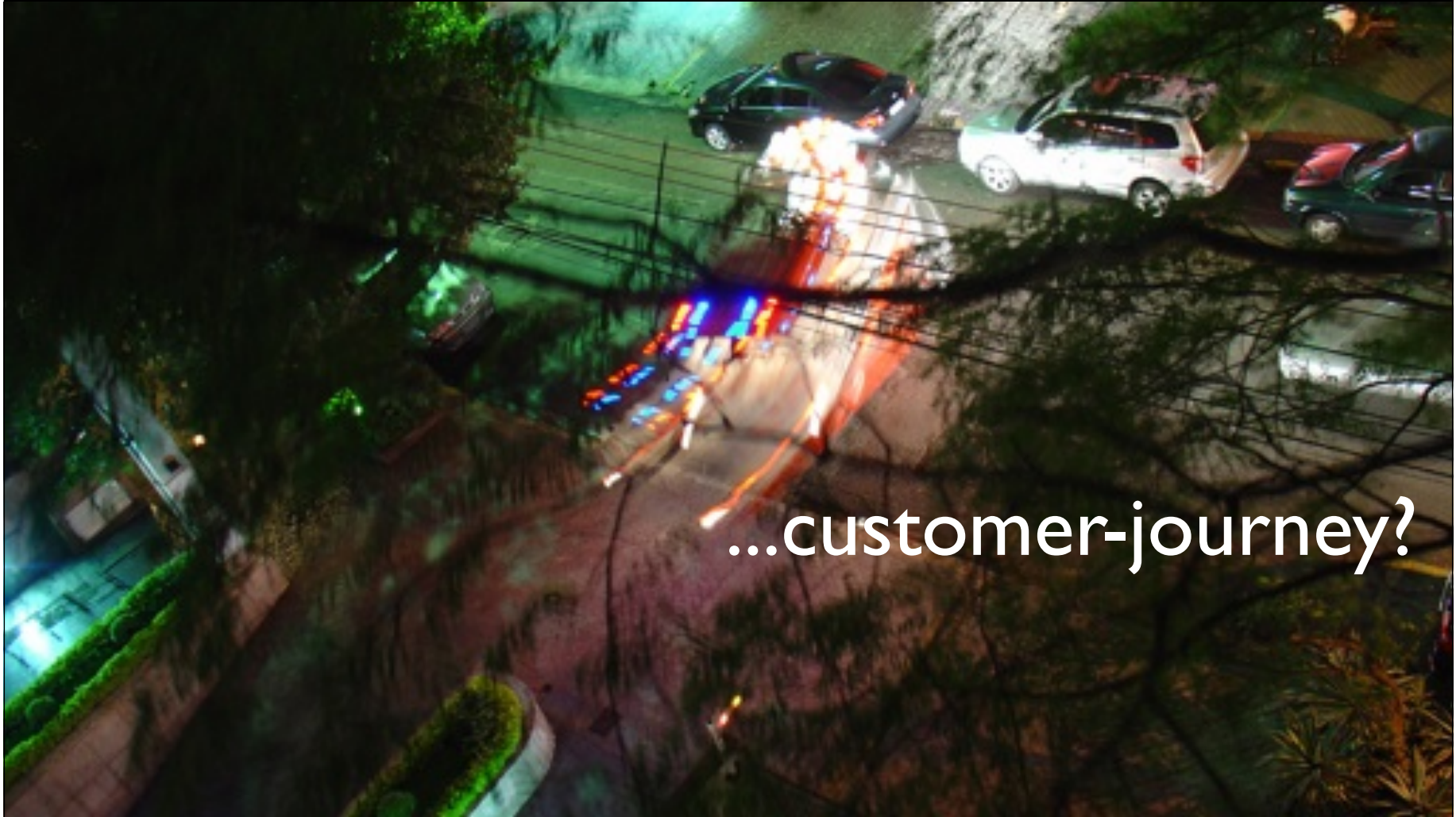
and risks...





customer-experience...

CC-BY jorgeBRAZIL via Flickr



...customer-journey?

# And remember...

“Customers do not appear  
in our processes...  
...we appear in their stories.”

paraphrase from Chris Potts, *recreAtion*, Technics, 2010

Our organisation acts within the scope of the enterprise:  
think broader-enterprise first - outside-in, not inside-out.



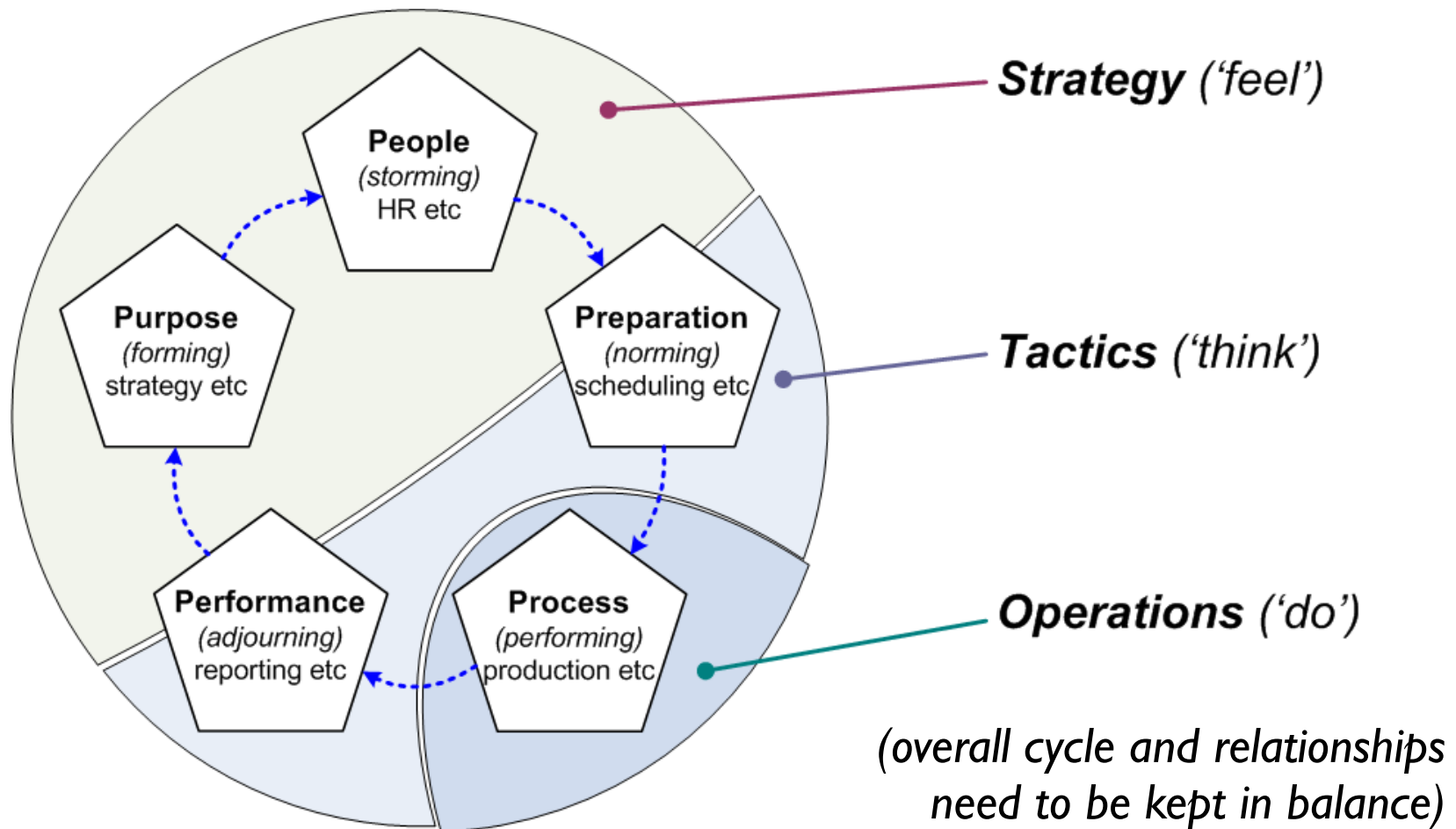
**“To be continued...”**

# Four types of stories

- *Single-shot*: enterprise delimited by one project with a clear ‘character-arc’ or change
- *Sequel*: re-uses a previous enterprise, but often without any new ‘character-arc’
- *Series*: different stories within the same ‘world’ bounded by the enterprise
- *Serial*: continuing stories within a ‘world’

(Most enterprise-stories work best as series or serial.)

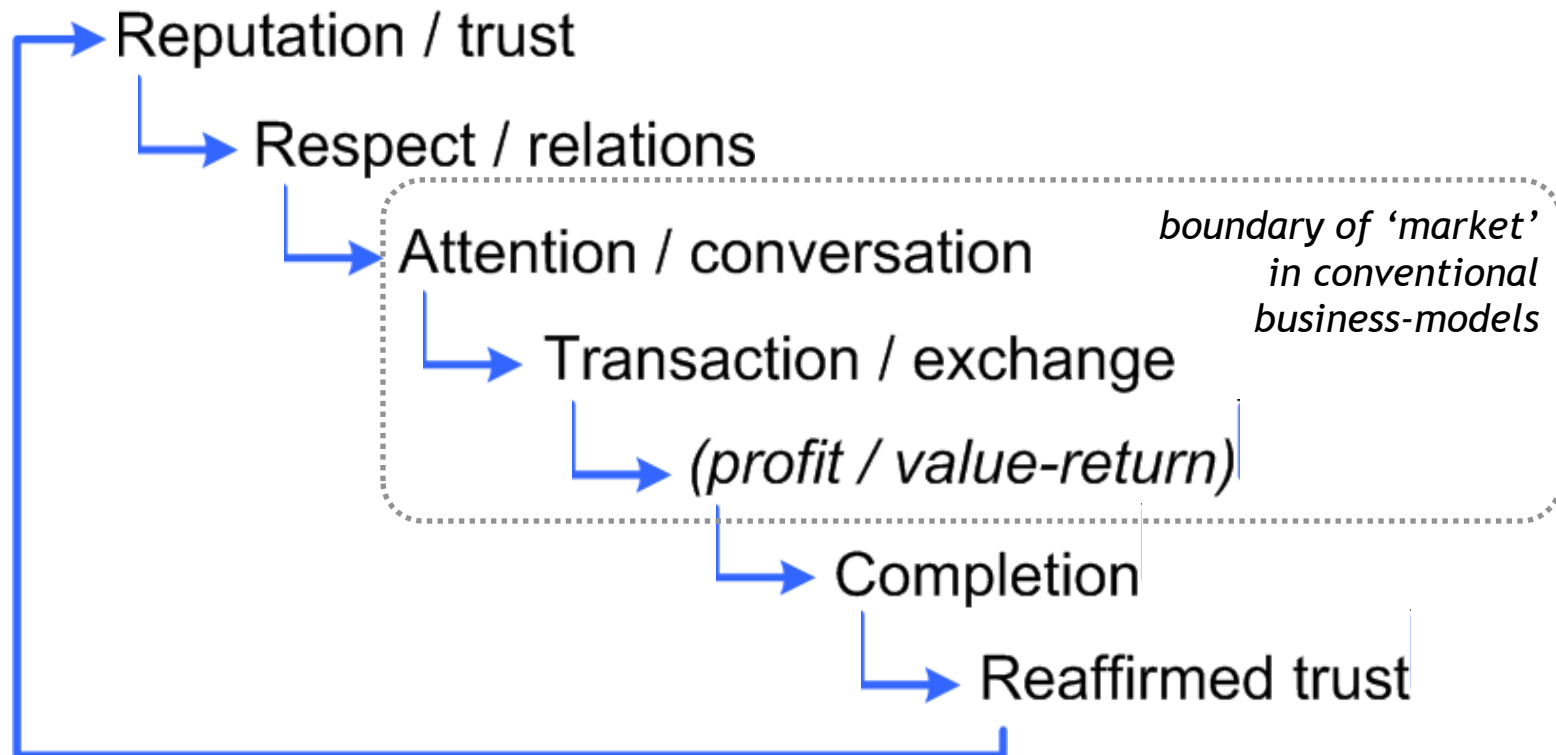
# The strategy-cycle





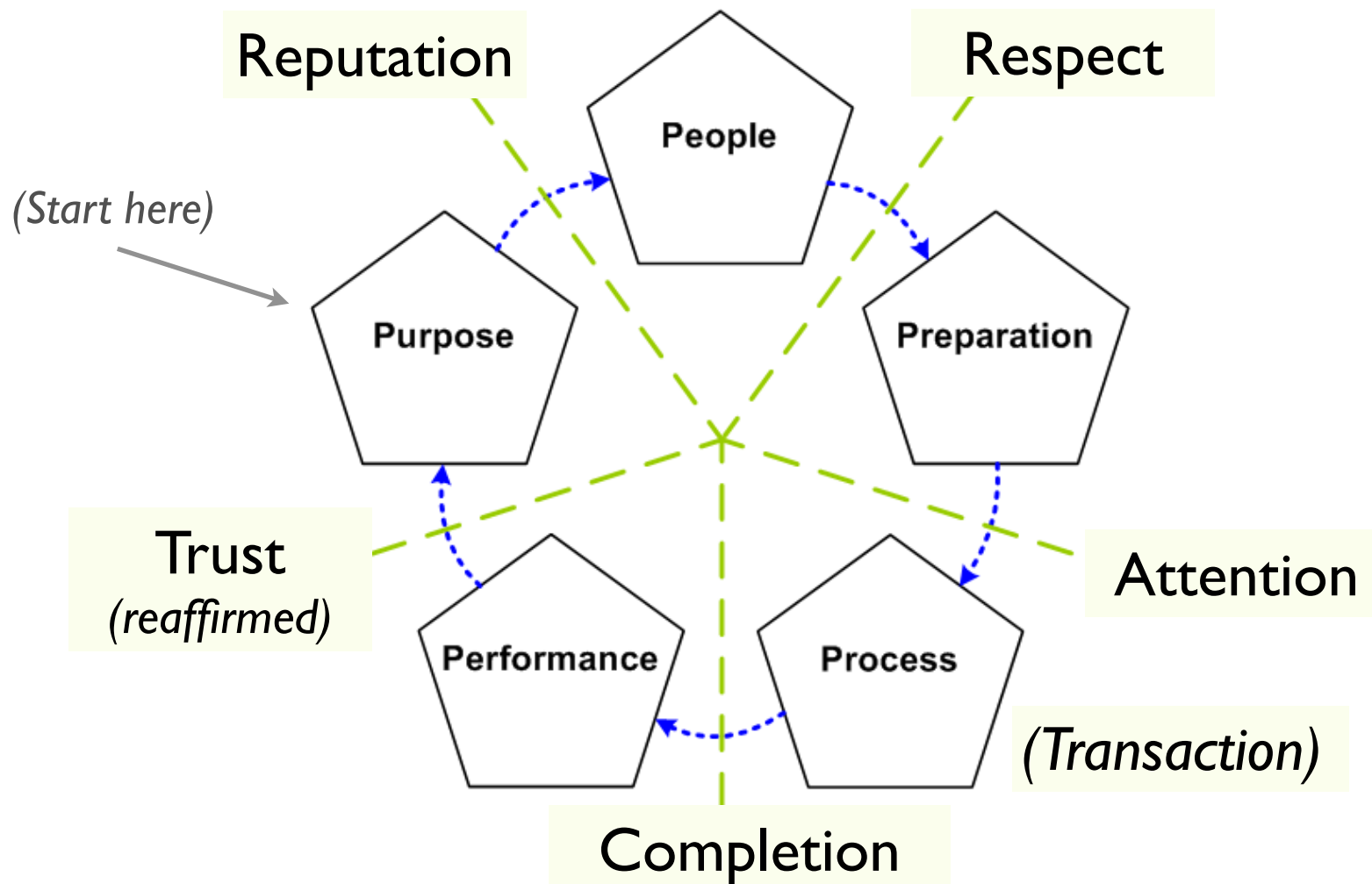
# The market-cycle

***Shared-purpose*** defines the market

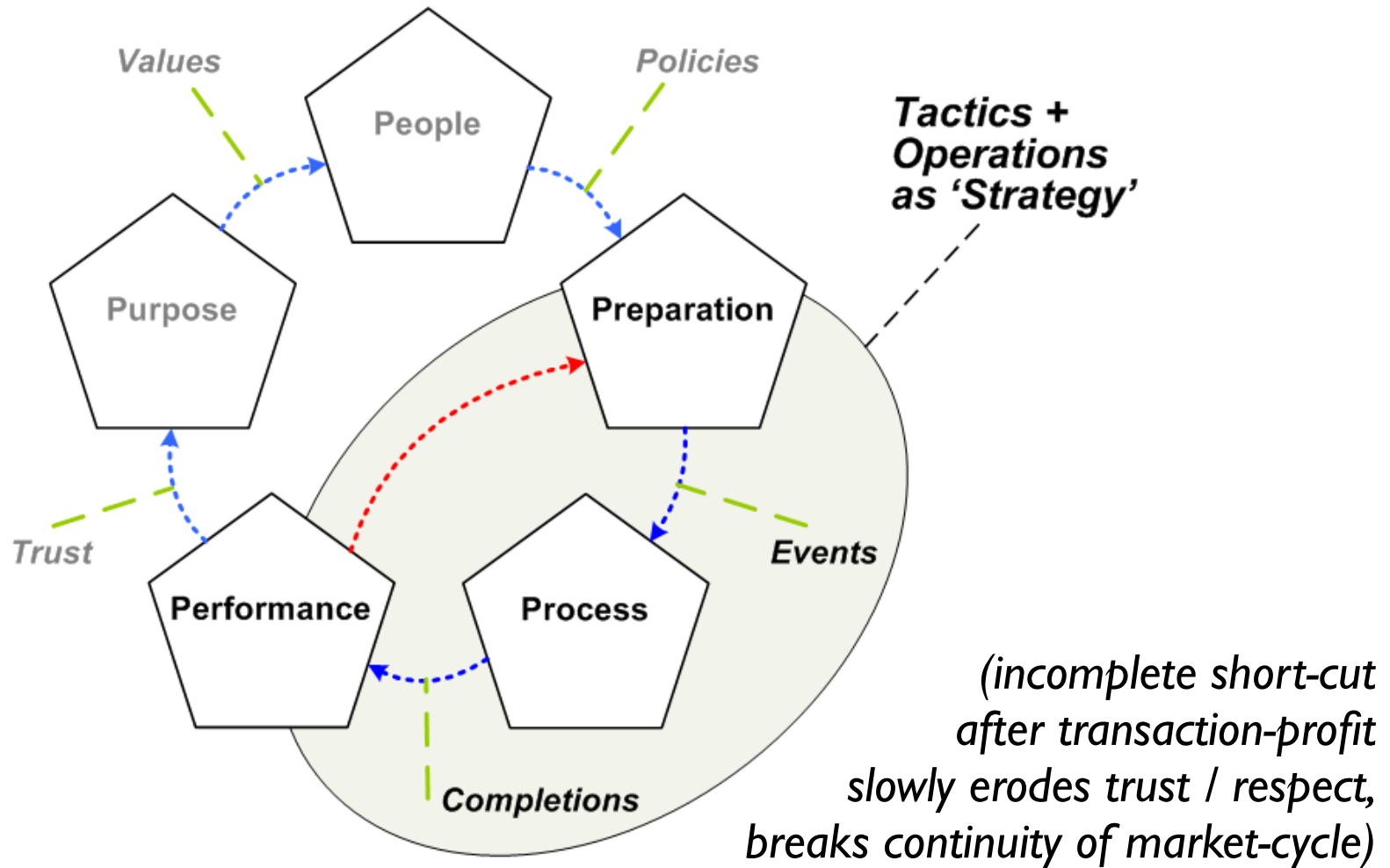


*(transactions depend on (reaffirmed) reputation and trust)*

# The story-cycle



# 'Quick-money' failure-cycle





**“Every picture tells a story”**



Most current EA toolsets  
are for design of static structures...

...we also need our tools  
to support the story.



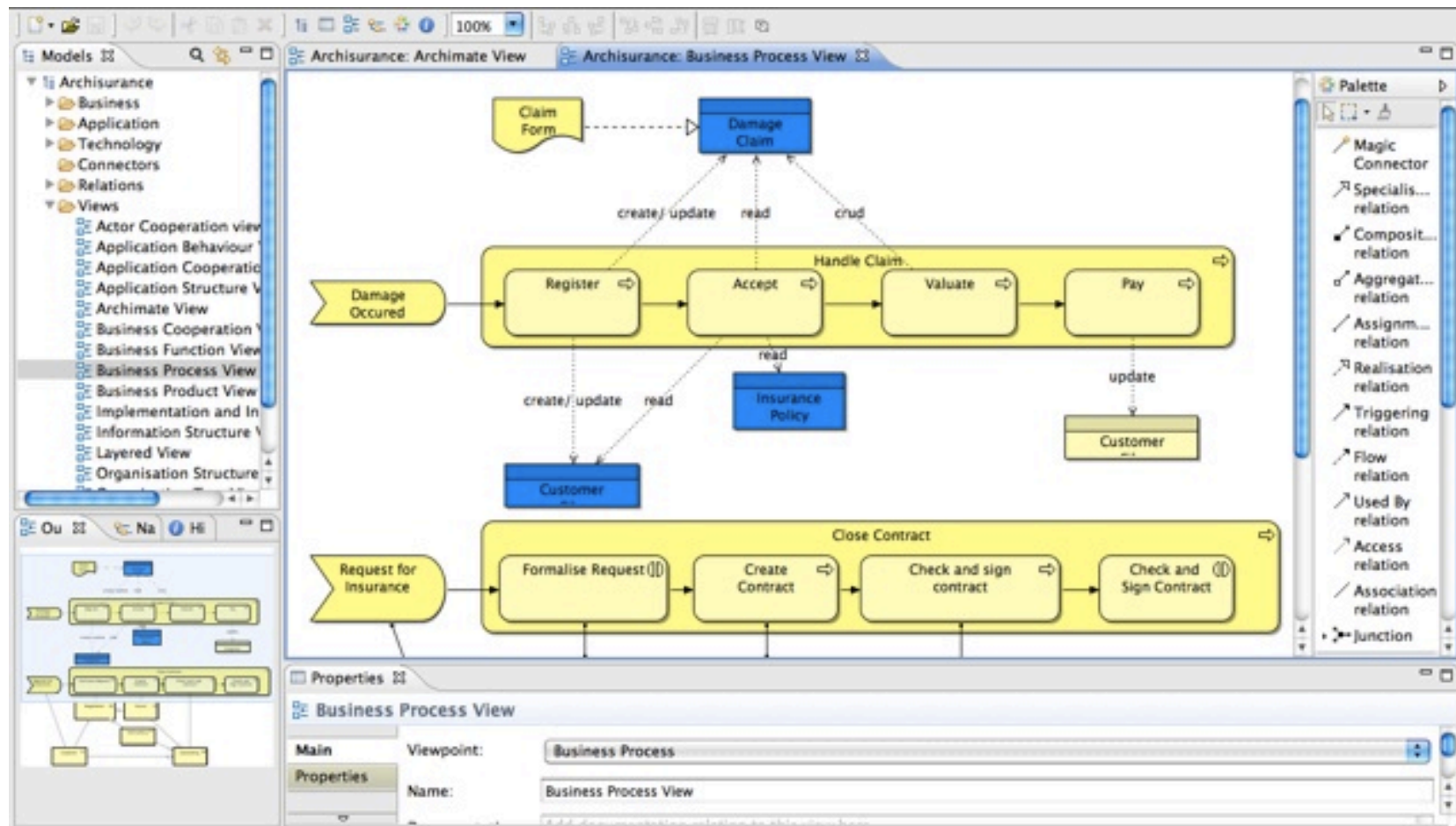
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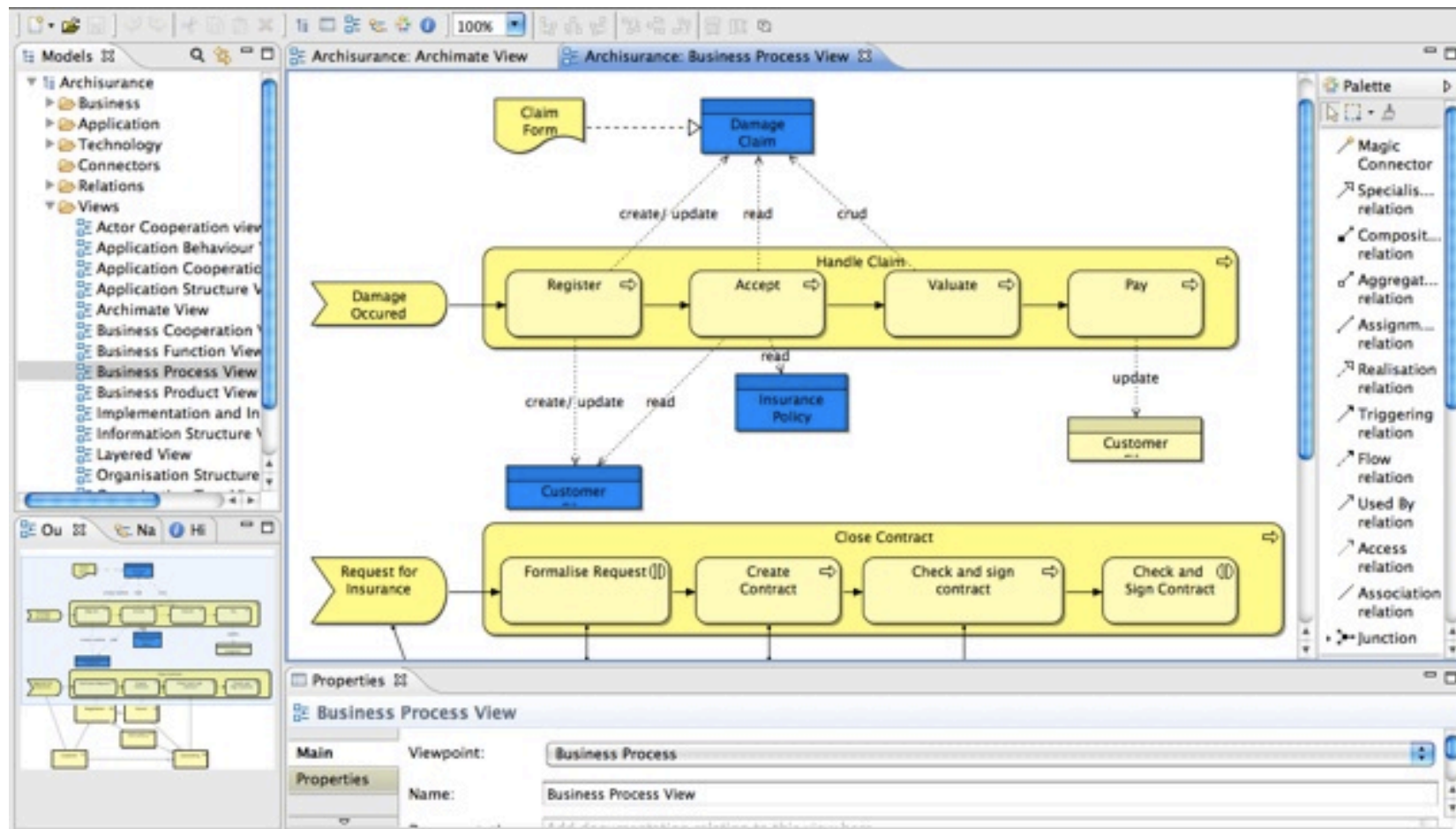
# Supporting the story

“A challenge to vendors of  
EA toolsets: we need  
***stronger support for story***  
within our EA tools:  
images, audio, video and more.”

# Often excellent on structure...

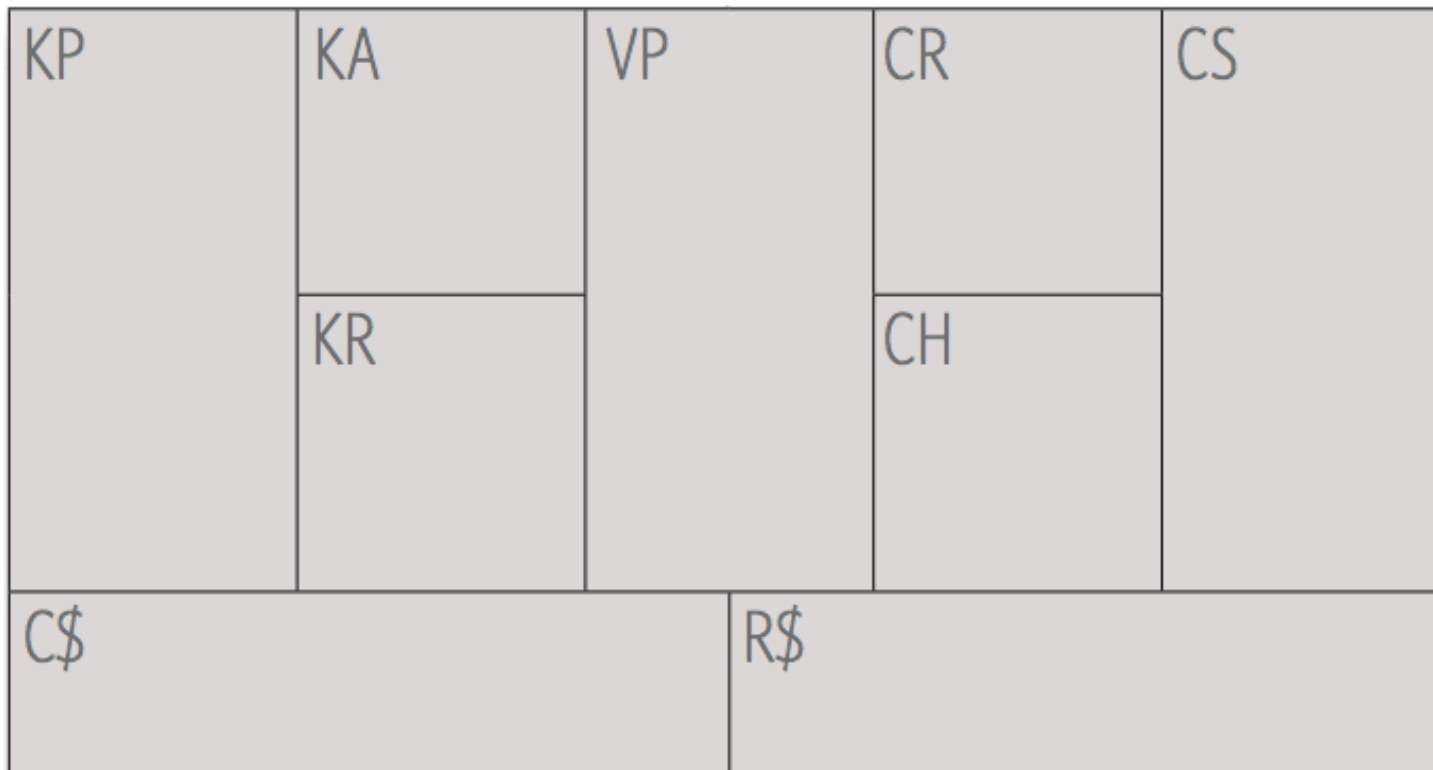


# ...but where's the story?





# From structure to story

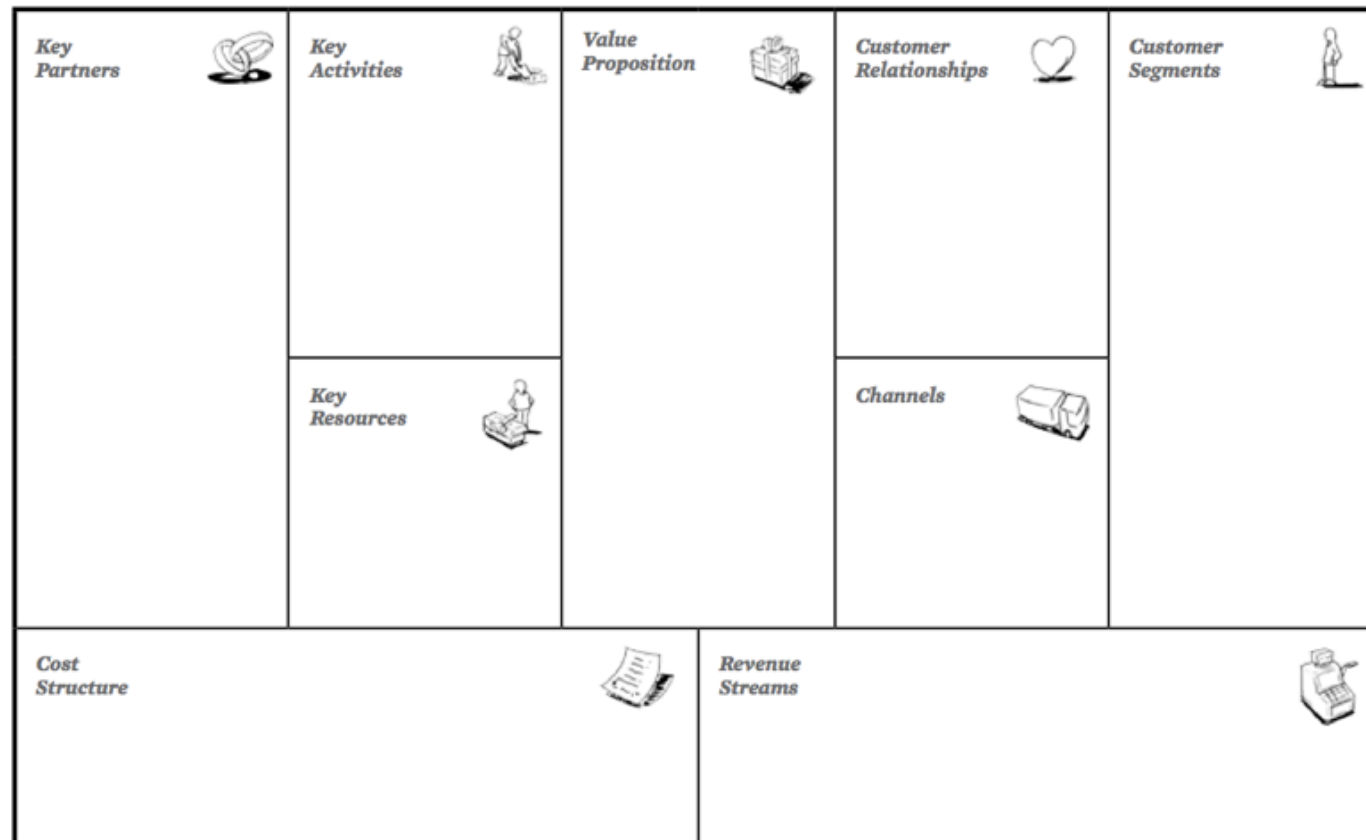


*(Published variants of Business Model Canvas)*

*Alex Osterwalder / Alan Smith and others (cc) 2012*

# From structure to story

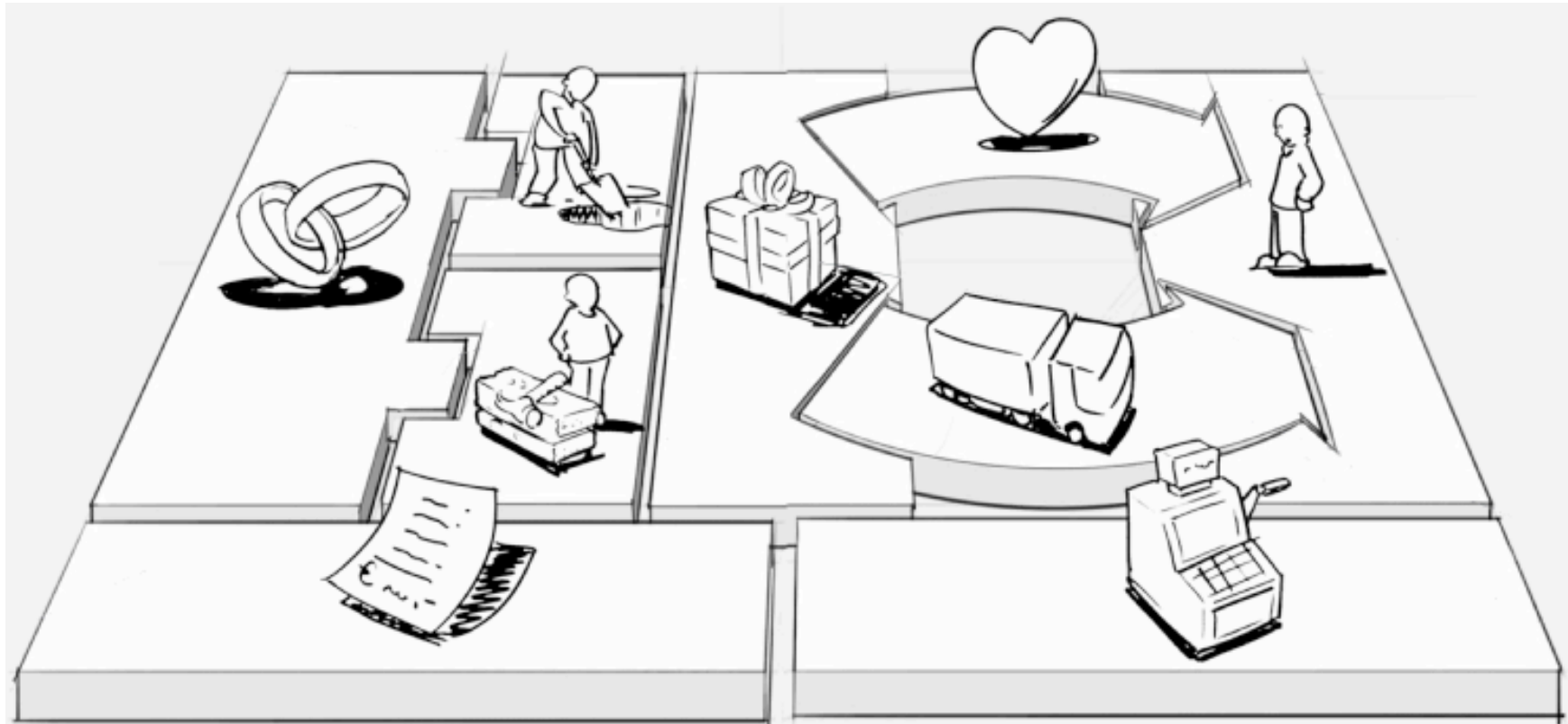
## *The Business Model Canvas*



*(Published variants of Business Model Canvas)*

Alex Osterwalder / Alan Smith and others (cc) 2012

# From structure to story

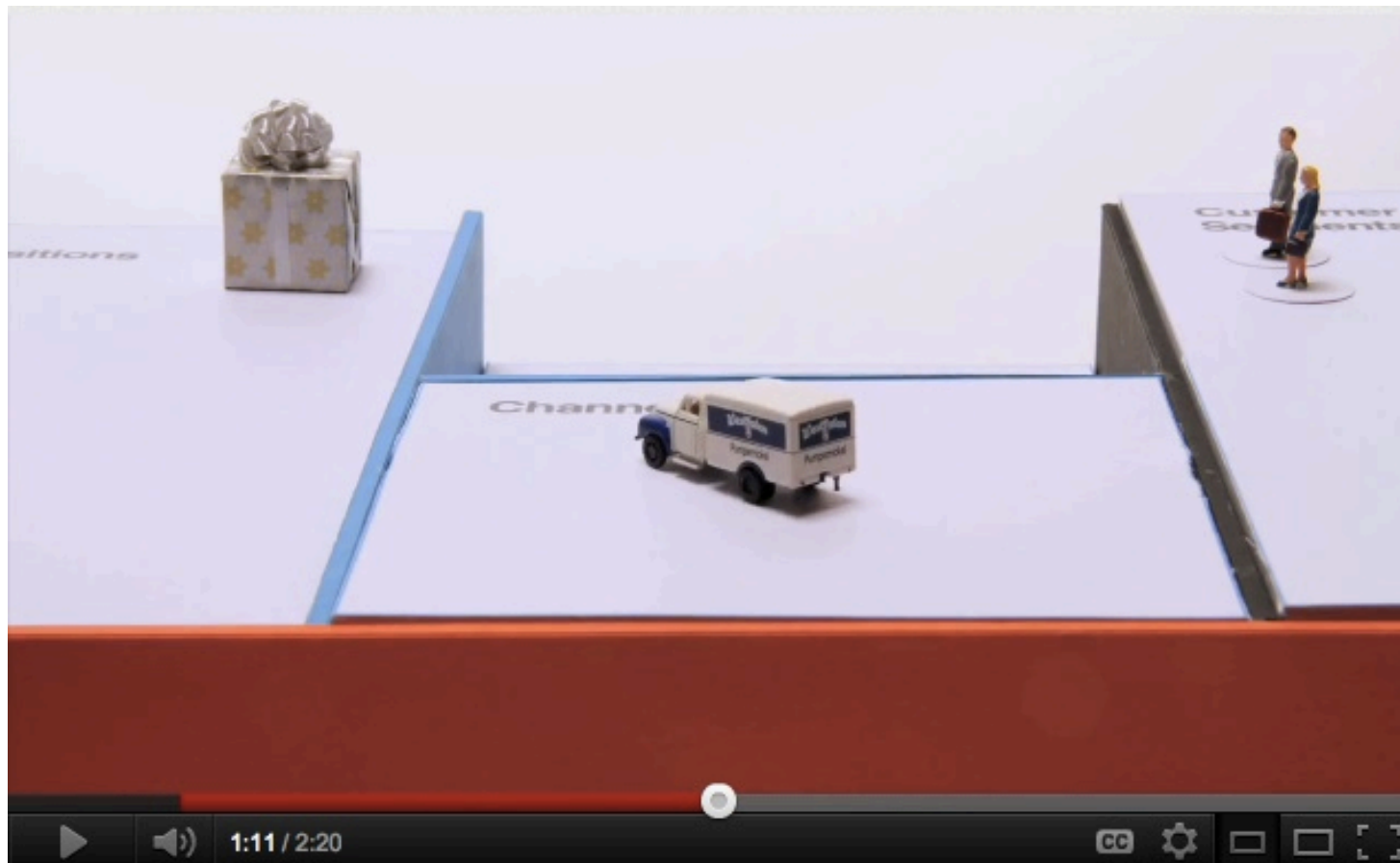


*(Published variants of Business Model Canvas)*

Alex Osterwalder / Alan Smith and others (cc) 2012




# From structure to story



*“Business Model Canvas In 2 Minutes” (YouTube: <http://youtu.be/QoAOzMTLP5s> )*

*Alex Osterwalder / Alan Smith / businessmodeltv and others (cc) 2012*



Wherever we are in architecture,  
wherever we see structure,  
we also need to be able to describe...

"What's the  
story?"

**“What’s the story  
for your enterprise?”**



### **Further information:**

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Slidedecks: <http://www.slideshare.net/tetradian>

Publications: <http://tetradianbooks.com>

- Books:
- ***The enterprise as story***: the role of narrative in enterprise-architecture (2012)
  - ***Mapping the enterprise***: modelling the enterprise as services with the Enterprise Canvas (2010)
  - ***Everyday enterprise-architecture***: sensemaking, strategy, structures and solutions (2010)
  - ***Doing enterprise-architecture***: process and practice in the real enterprise (2009)