SCHOOL for THINKTANKERS

On Think Tanks
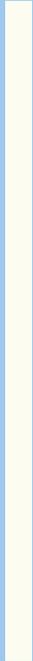
Organizing to promote strategic capacities

HOW DO WE WORK?

- Specific challenge for everyone
  → Regardless of placement in the organizational structure

- No technical support roles
  → Inverted pyramid structure

- No HR department
  → People and Talent directly handled by Directors

SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

EVOLUTION OVER TIME

- Initially focused on **policy makers**
- Questioning all the **"what ifs"**
- **Opening focus** towards:
  - Ecosystems
  - Proof-of-concept projects
  - Advocacy
- **Theory of change**

SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

Promoting strategic thinking

WHY

- To maximize potential **impact**
- To give **autonomy** to each team (and individuals) and promote conversations focused on strategy.
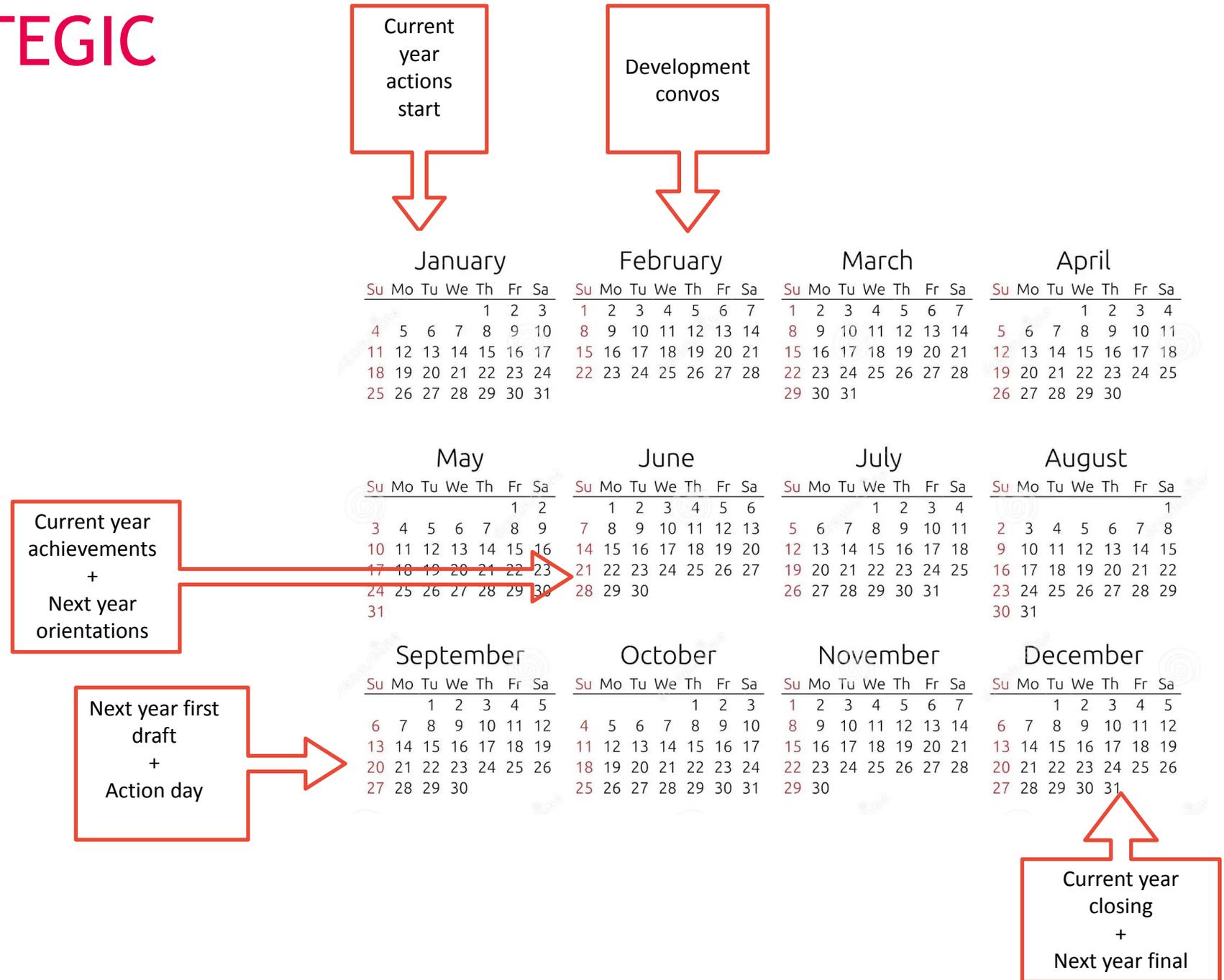- To **empower** teams to solve strategic dilemmas and be effective leaders.

RISKS

- Empowering the team doesn't mean directors deflect responsibility
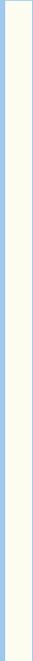- Be careful not to promote uncertainty

HOW

- 5 years strategic plan + annual planning
- Promoting strategic conversations with a shared narrative:
  - At different **levels** (directors, department heads, etc.)
  - With different **formats** (thursday sessions, informal spaces, etc.)
  - Using different **tools** (annual planning, Asana, BSC)
- Development conversations

ANNUAL STRATEGIC MOMENTS

- 3 processes at once
- All based on strategy

Current year actions start

Development convos

Current year achievements + Next year orientations

Next year first draft + Action day

Current year closing + Next year final

January
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December
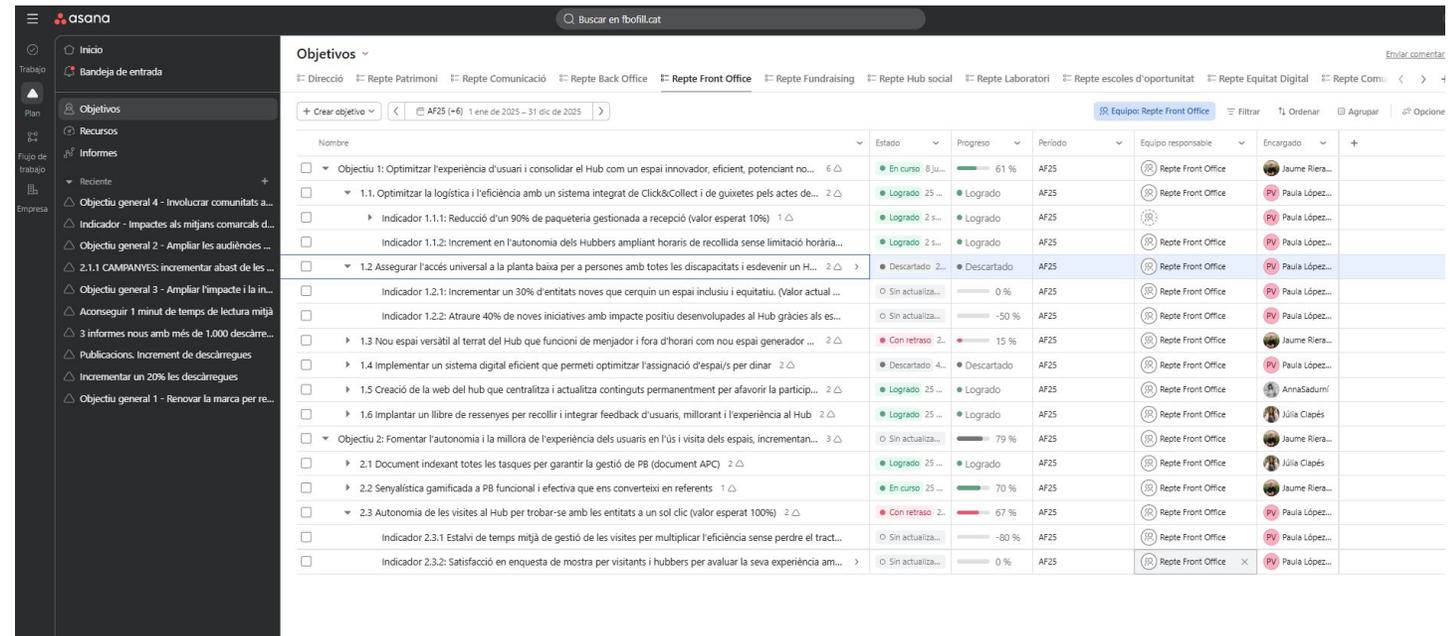| Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SCHOOL for THINKTANKERS

Tools and spaces to promote strategic thinking

ASANA FOR YEARLY PLANNING

- Avoid using it for accountability purposes

- Full viewing permits for all

- Tool to follow up and guide conversation but not a requirement to update
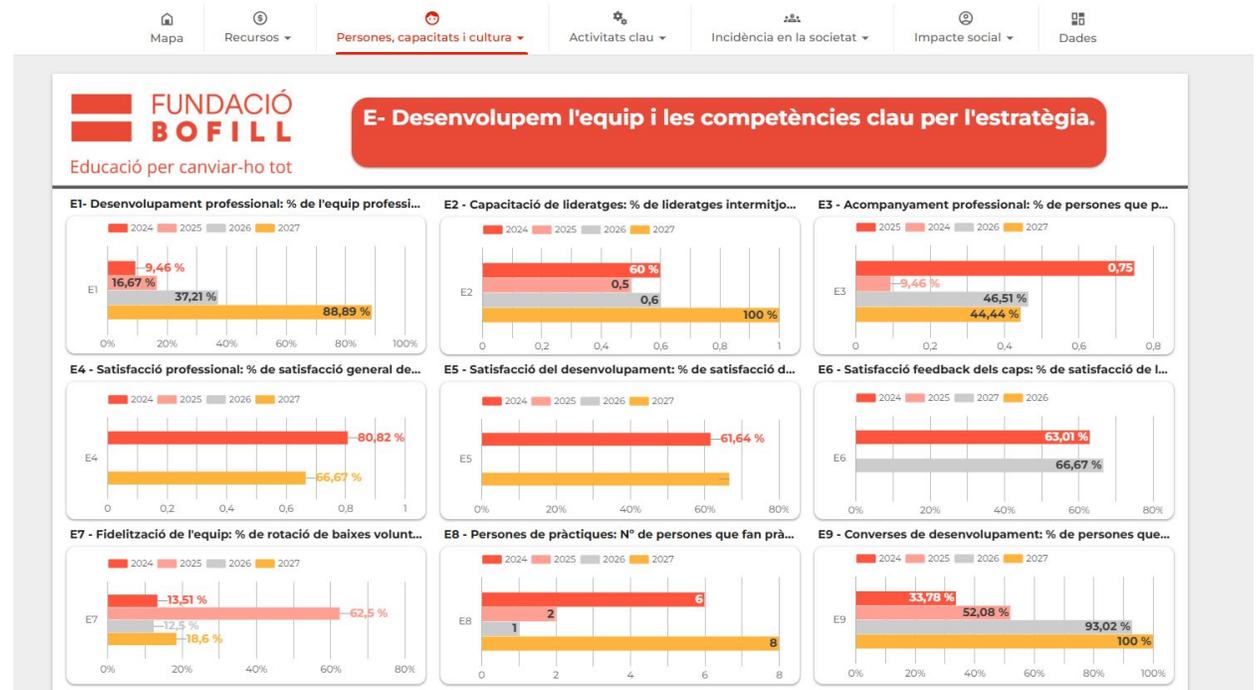
- Constant redefinition

LOOKER STUDIO FOR BALANCED SCORECARD (BSC)

- To measure impact at the organizational level
- Related to the 5-year strategic plan
- To track hard KPIs

SCHOOL for THINKTANKERS

THURSDAY SESSIONS

- Not informative, but strategic
- Sharing narrative and strategy
- Mandatory for everyone (not just directors):
  - Refresher on how each role impacts strategy
- Team members share with a strategic perspective:
  - Learning points
  - Dilemmas
  - Innovations introduced
  - Failures
  - Risks and mitigations
  - Next steps and alternative scenarios
  - major takeaways for the rest of the team

SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

INFORMAL SPACES

- Google Chat
  - It exists to avoid strategic spaces to turn into informative ones
  - Documents, articles, papers to enhance everyone's knowledge around our issues
  - Successes and impact achieved
  - Conversation is not promoted to avoid distraction
- All team-wide spaces

SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

Challenges, risks and mitigations

Balance strategy and accountability

- Team of directors shared narrative
- Middle management guidance
- Accountability reports limited to in-context conversations
- Constant revision of strategy: changes are an opportunity to realign

SCHOOL for
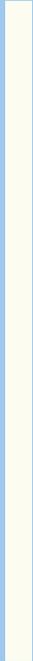THINKTANKERS

Balance empowerment and changing context

- Empowering within changing context
- Sustaining motivation when there's no certainty: *No sure shots!*
- Resiliency over changing goals and approaches
- Incorporating context analysis to conversations and linking it to changing strategies.

SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

Advancing strategy based on individual leadership

- We ask teams to take their challenge as far as possible.

- Focus and recognition not based on doing what we said but on taking challenges as far as possible.

- To do that, we promote autonomy in risk taking BUT with shared responsibility.

Balancing focus and results oriented mindset vs. expansive strategic thinking

- We want teams focused on their goals and being highly results oriented
- We ALSO want teams with free time to think about "what's next".
- Hard balance!

Ongoing dilemmas

Prescription
vs.
implementation

Scaling up
vs.
establishing standards of quality

Questions?
Thoughts?

Thanks!

Mònica Nadal, Director of Research
mnadal@fundaciobofill.org

Lídia Climent, Deputy Director
lcliment@fundaciobofill.org

SCHOOL for THINKTANKERS
www.ott.school