

# BRIDGING THE VALLEY OF DEATH

## An Approach to aligning Design Agencies and their Clients through Organisational Empathy

The value of design is widely acclaimed with organisations turning to it to ensure they deliver thoughtful user experiences. However, the value which design creates can only be delivered in larger organisations when it is aligned with the practices and capabilities already in place.

Failing to align a concept and an organisation can cause challenges around adoption and implementation, leading to concepts to be shelved and eventually abandoned. This phenomena is known as the valley of death.

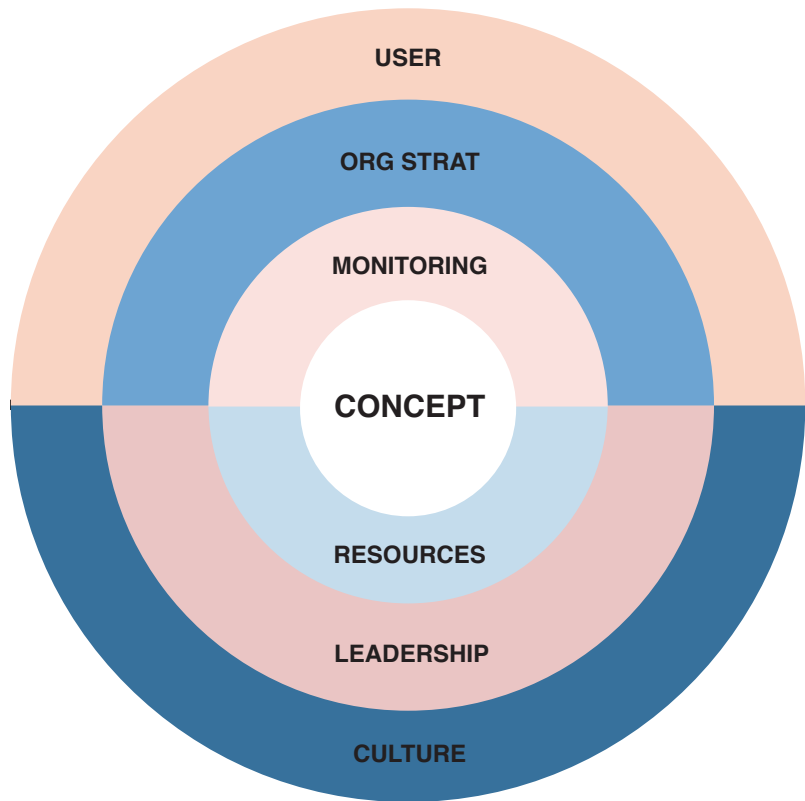
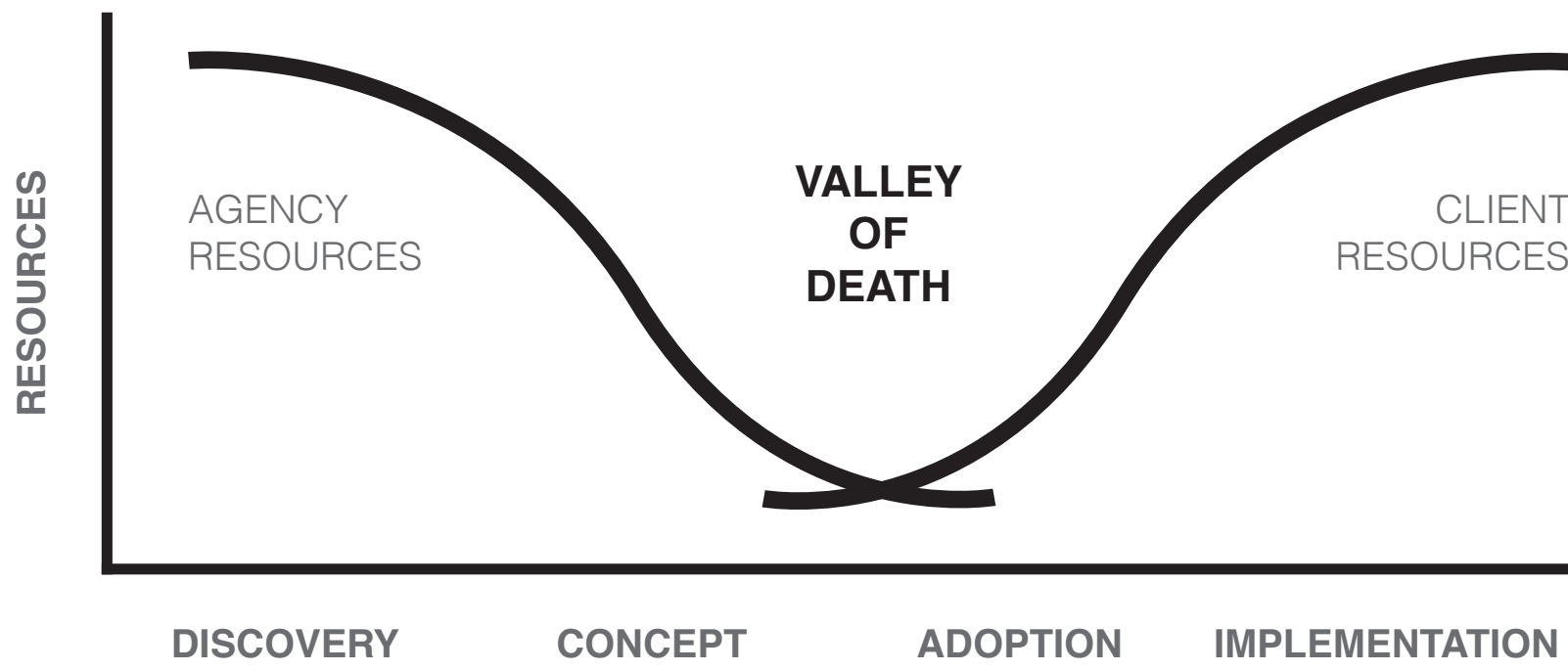
This thesis aimed to solve this challenge of misalignment.

Interviews at service design agencies, client organisations, and in collaboration with Studio Kraftwerk to further understand the challenge of the valley of death. From this it was found that:

*Neither agencies or their clients explicitly take responsibility for relating a concept to the current state of the organisation.*

When aligning a concept to an organisaiton for adoption, it's influence on the firm needs to be considered. Through a literature review and based on feedback from practioners these aspects were consolidated into the Organisational Empathy Framework shown below.

These aspects consider the influnece an idea will have on criteria related to impact and achievability that are relevant to the client organisation.



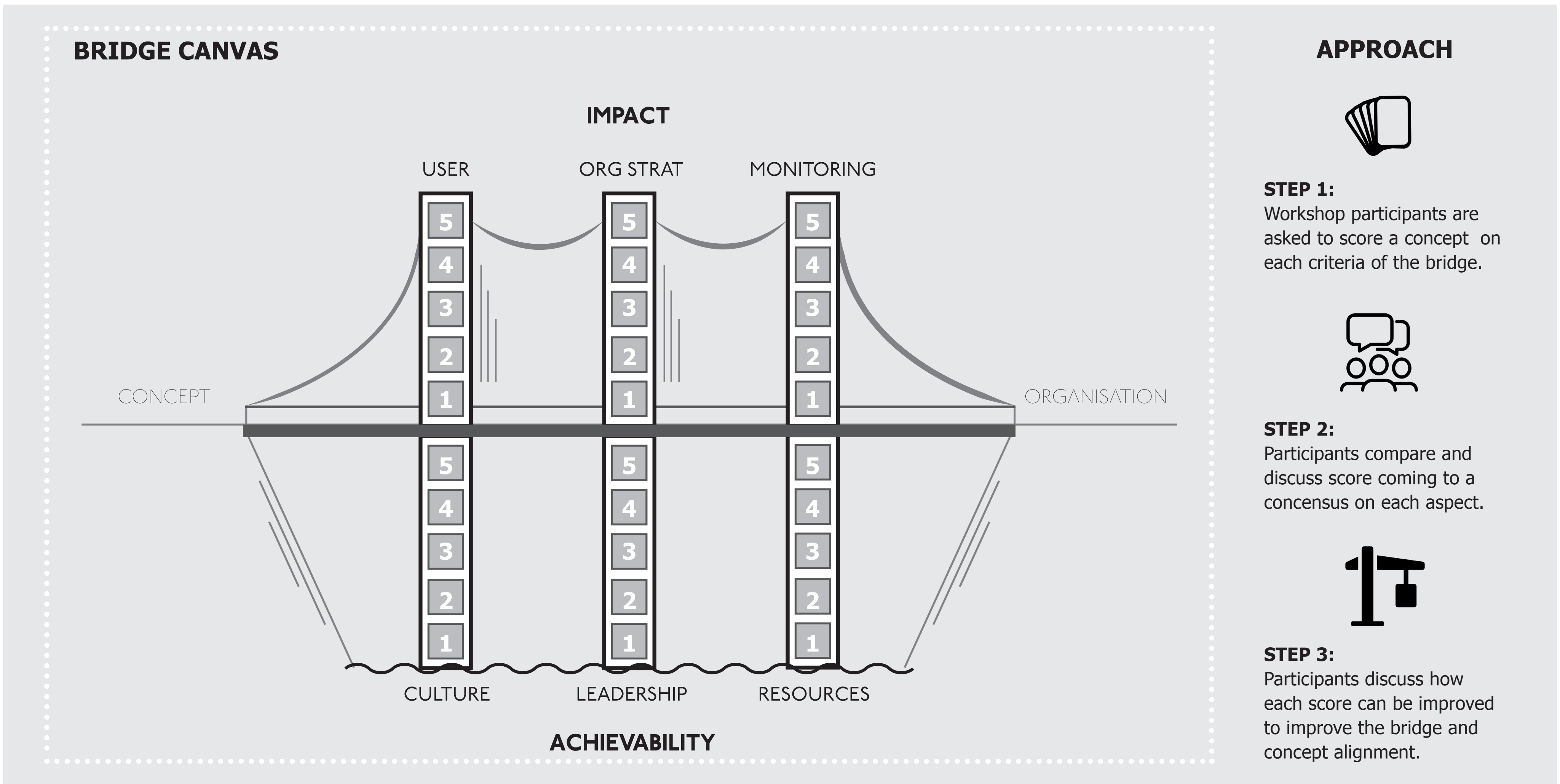
## Bridging Workshop

To make the organisational empathy framework actionable the bridging workshop was created. The aim of the workshop is to assess the alignment of a concept to the current state of an organisation, then improve the alignment.

The workshop plays on the metaphor of a bridge, shown below, as a means of bridging the valley of death, thereby aligning design agencies and their clients.

The approach outlined down the right, assess a concept scoring it on a five part likert scale which make the foundations and towers on the bridge. Following the assessment workshop participants then discuss how to improve the score, and the bridge to better align the concept and the organisation.

This approach was developed and tested with Studio Kraftwerk to align their work and has since been adopted in their process with clients.



## APPROACH



**STEP 1:**  
Workshop participants are asked to score a concept on each criteria of the bridge.



**STEP 2:**  
Participants compare and discuss score coming to a consensus on each aspect.



**STEP 3:**  
Participants discuss how each score can be improved to improve the bridge and concept alignment.

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**Bridging the Valley of Death:** An Approach to aligning Design

Agencies and their Clients through Organisational Empathy

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