

Ecosystem Mapping

**How to identify new customers, new
partnerships and new markets**



Introduction

Growing any business requires understanding of how build products and services that customers want, and to get those products to those customers.

To get started with that understanding you need to understand the context of your business within an ecosystem of players and potential customers. You need directions - and a map to guide you on your way.

This is where Ecosystem Mapping comes in. By mapping the territory of your products and services, you can identify new customer segments, new partnerships and even new ways to package products and services to meet markets and achieve growth.





When you think about the word “Ecosystem”, you may imagine the interaction of organisms with each other and their environment.

In a business context, it’s not very different. Suppliers, wholesalers and retailers all work within an ecosystem in product sales. Service providers all buy from, and sell to other service providers and customers to achieve business goals or outcomes.

When you map these relationships between players in a business ecosystem, you can discover who is who, where there are more or fewer players, and identify value gaps in the system. This is where opportunities for growth and partnerships emerge.

MAPPING FOR GROWTH

What is an Ecosystem Map?

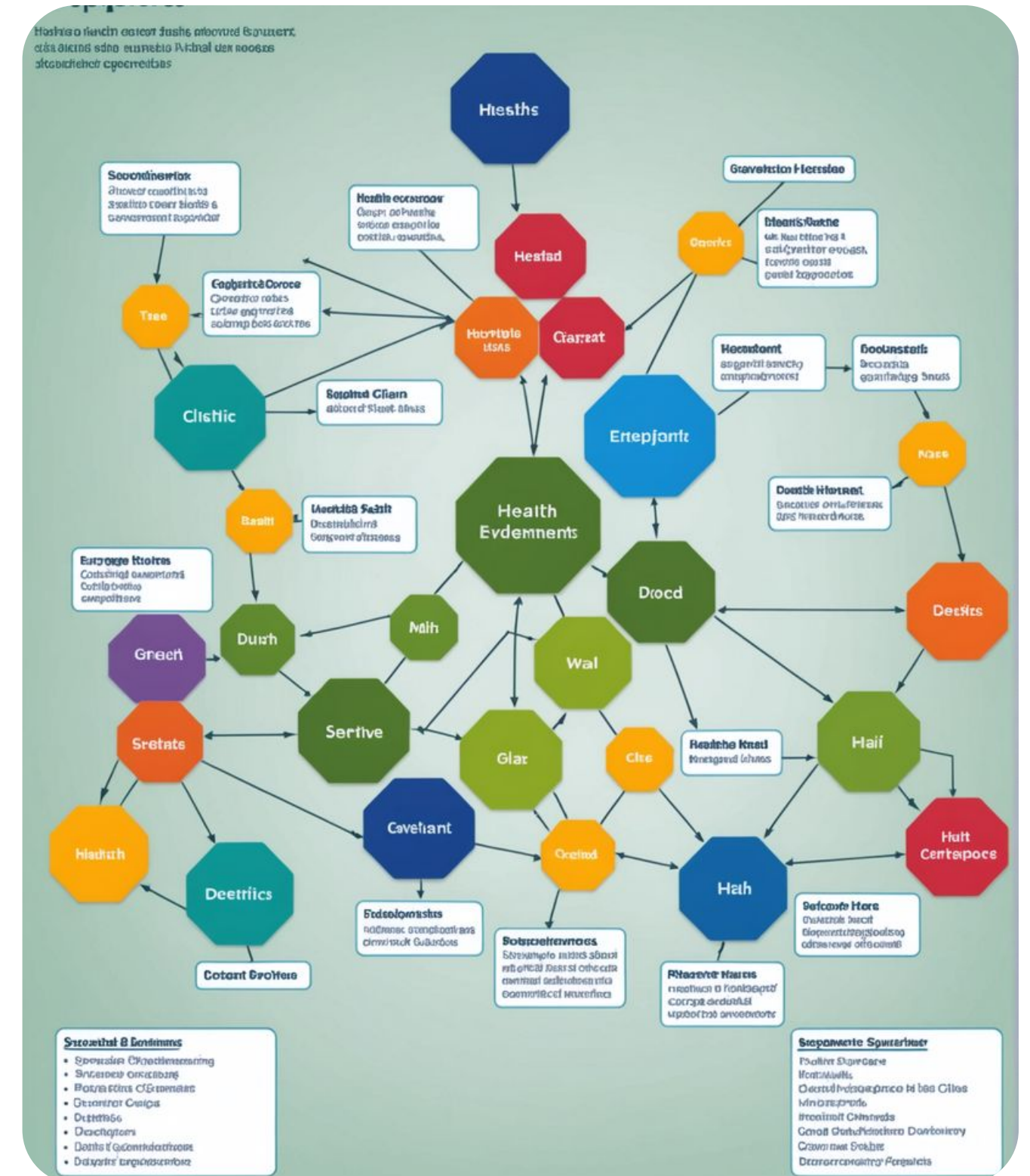
01

What is an Ecosystem Map

An Ecosystem Map is a visual representation of all the potential users, buyers, suppliers and regulators of products and services. It is used to understand key players, competitors, partners and suppliers in a marketplace, and to identify where there may be opportunities to make new relationships or serve new customers.

An Ecosystem Map will usually identify organisations, people, resources and functions that may benefit from your products or services to meet their needs.

You can also use an Ecosystem Map to track value exchanges and power structures that help you to identify key decision makers in various customer segments, so you can discover who best to engage with to help influence adoption of your products and services.



Benefits of mapping

An ecosystem map shows how customers, suppliers, regulators, financiers, and competitors are linked. Without a map, it's easy to overlook potential influences that can impact adoption of products and services.

Mapping often highlights underserved needs, unconnected stakeholders, or areas where value exchange is broken. These become natural places to position a product or service.

And by visualising who's involved in your business ecosystem, and how they interact, you can prioritise outreach and avoid wasting unnecessary effort.

The insight:

Ecosystem mapping helps you to spot where a small market intervention can unlock value and generate growth.



MAPPING FOR GROWTH

How to develop an Ecosystem Map

02



How to get started

The first step in building an ecosystem map is to be clear about what you want the map to show. Are you trying to uncover new customers, find strategic partners, or reveal gaps in the market?

Once you have defined your objective, establish boundaries around the scope of your map, such as specific industries, regions, or user groups. The early version does not need to be overly complex. The aim is to create a workable model that you can refine and expand over time.

Most importantly, approach the map as a living tool that should be revisited and updated as your knowledge of the market grows.

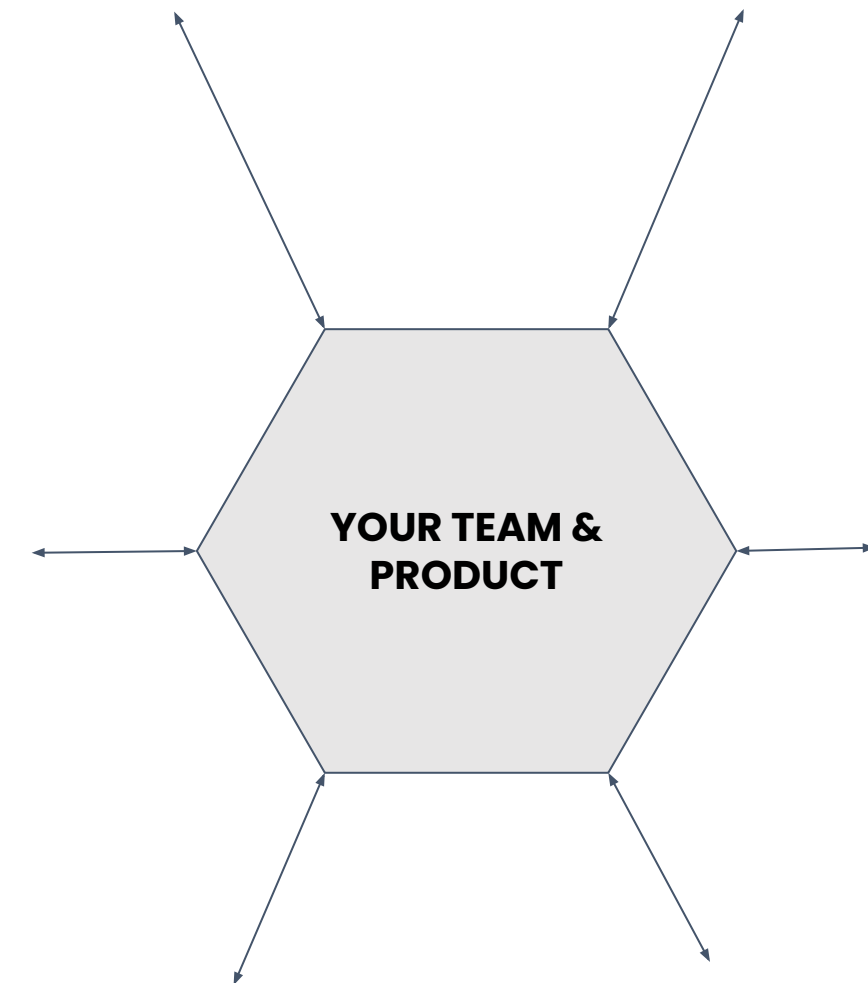


1. Start with you

Every ecosystem map begins with your own business at the centre. This means clarifying what you offer, which problems you solve, and what type of value exchange you bring to others in the system.

Consider whether you currently act as a supplier, a buyer, a service partner, or an influencer, and place yourself accordingly.

By defining your role in the ecosystem clearly, you create a reference point against which all other actors can be positioned, making it easier to see who interacts with you directly and who is currently out of reach.

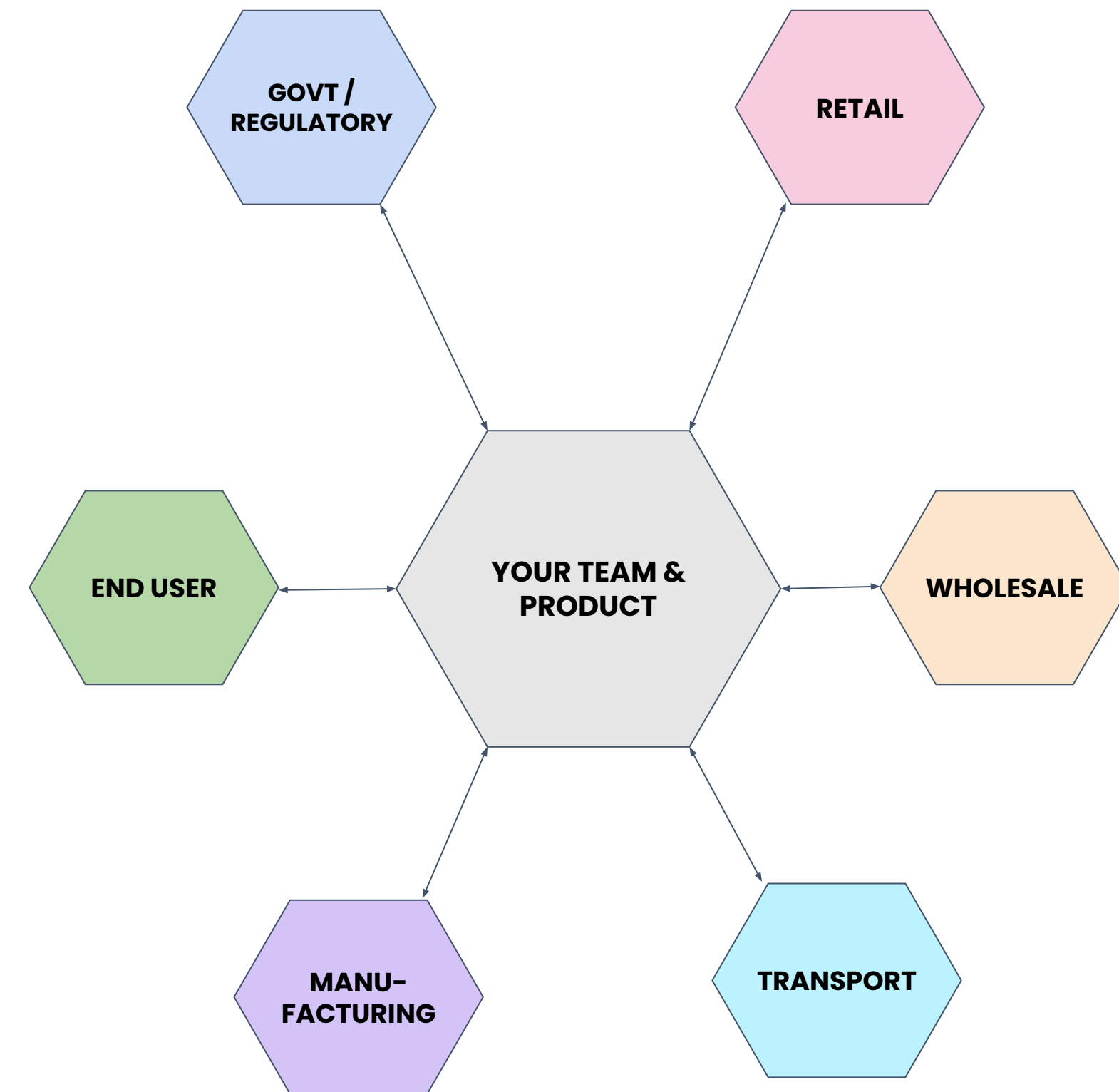


2. Identify user segments

With your own position established, the next step is to break down the different groups of potential customers who may benefit from what you provide.

These groups can be segmented by factors such as industry, company size, geography, or their role within a larger value chain. It is important not just to think about your current customer base, but also to look beyond it for segments you may not have considered before.

By doing this, you create a working list of distinct user categories, each of which can be analysed to determine where the strongest opportunities lie.

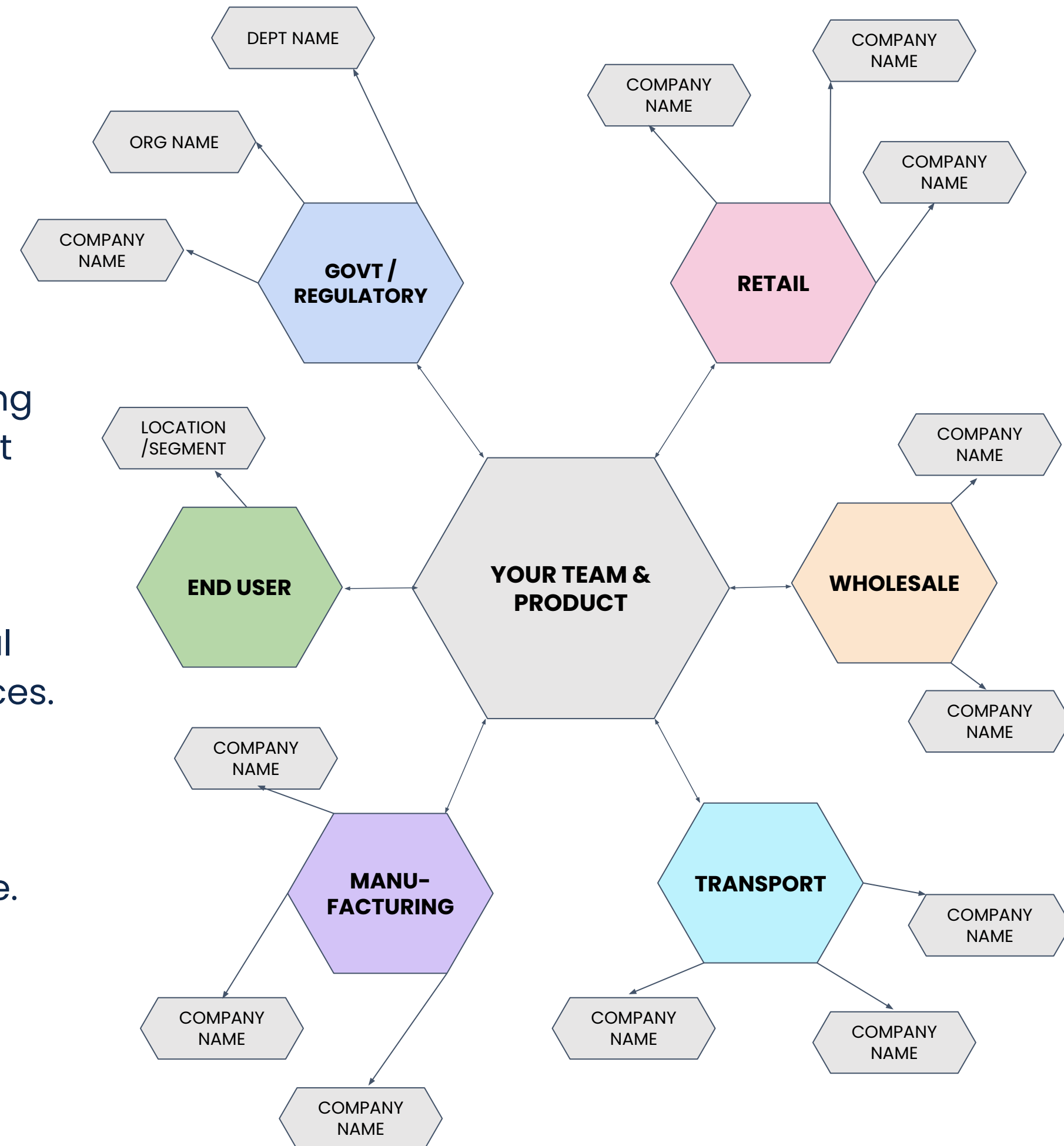


3. Identify companies in each segment

Once you have identified the user segments, the task is to fill those categories with real-world companies. This means listing specific organisations that match the profile of each segment and that have the potential to benefit from your product or service.

It helps to include both obvious choices and less conventional candidates, as innovation often comes from unexpected places.

Prioritisation becomes key at this stage, as you want to focus your efforts on those organisations that are most active, influential, or visibly in need of the type of solution you provide.



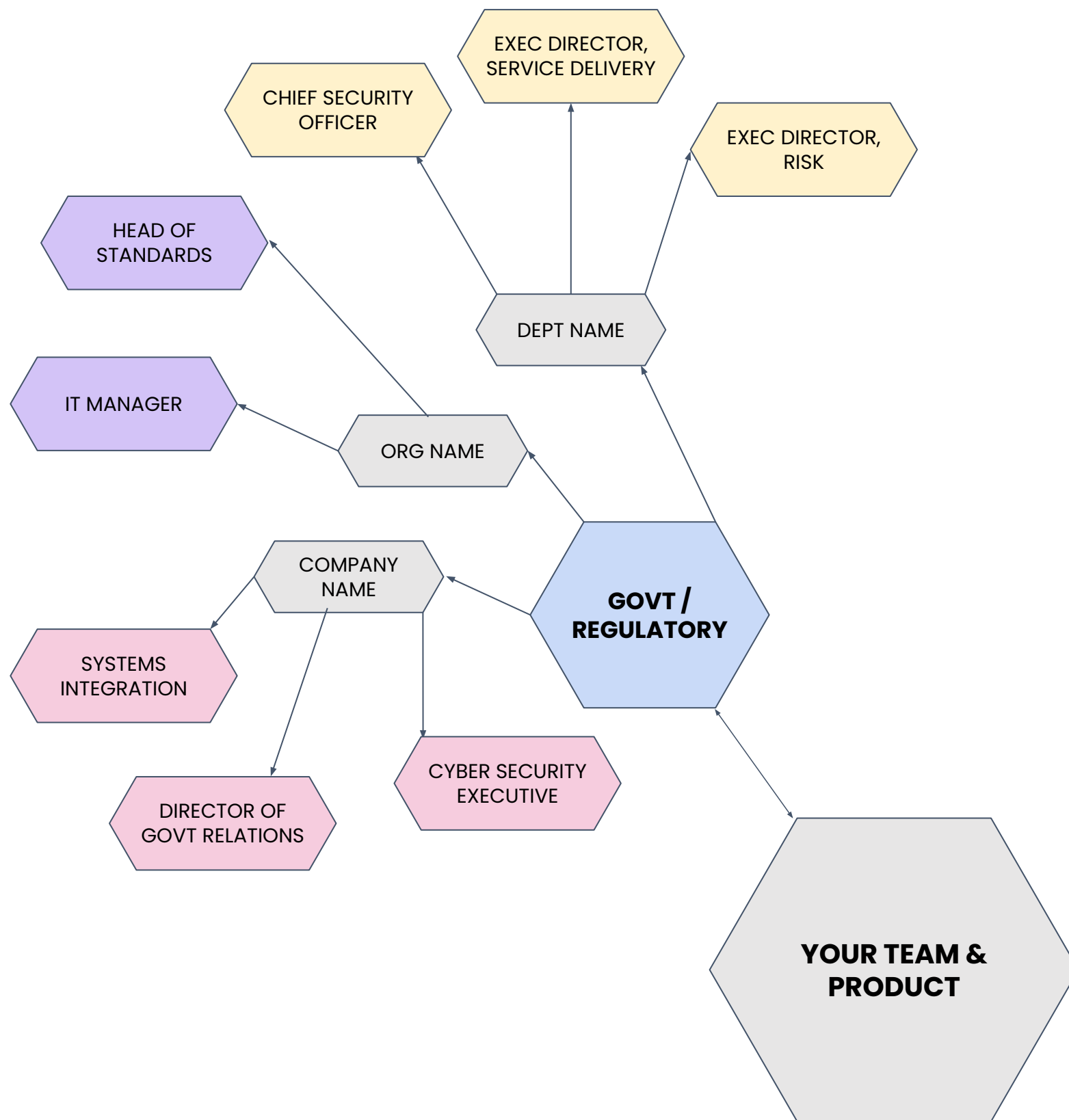
DISCOVERING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

4. Identify buyer roles in those companies

After identifying the companies themselves, the next layer of detail involves mapping the actual decision-makers within those organisations.

These may include procurement managers, operations directors, heads of engineering, or senior finance officers. In some cases, secondary influencers such as regulators or industry associations also play a critical role.

This stage transforms your map from an abstract picture of market segments into a tangible list of people whose decisions directly shape adoption. It is at this point that the ecosystem begins to feel practical and actionable.

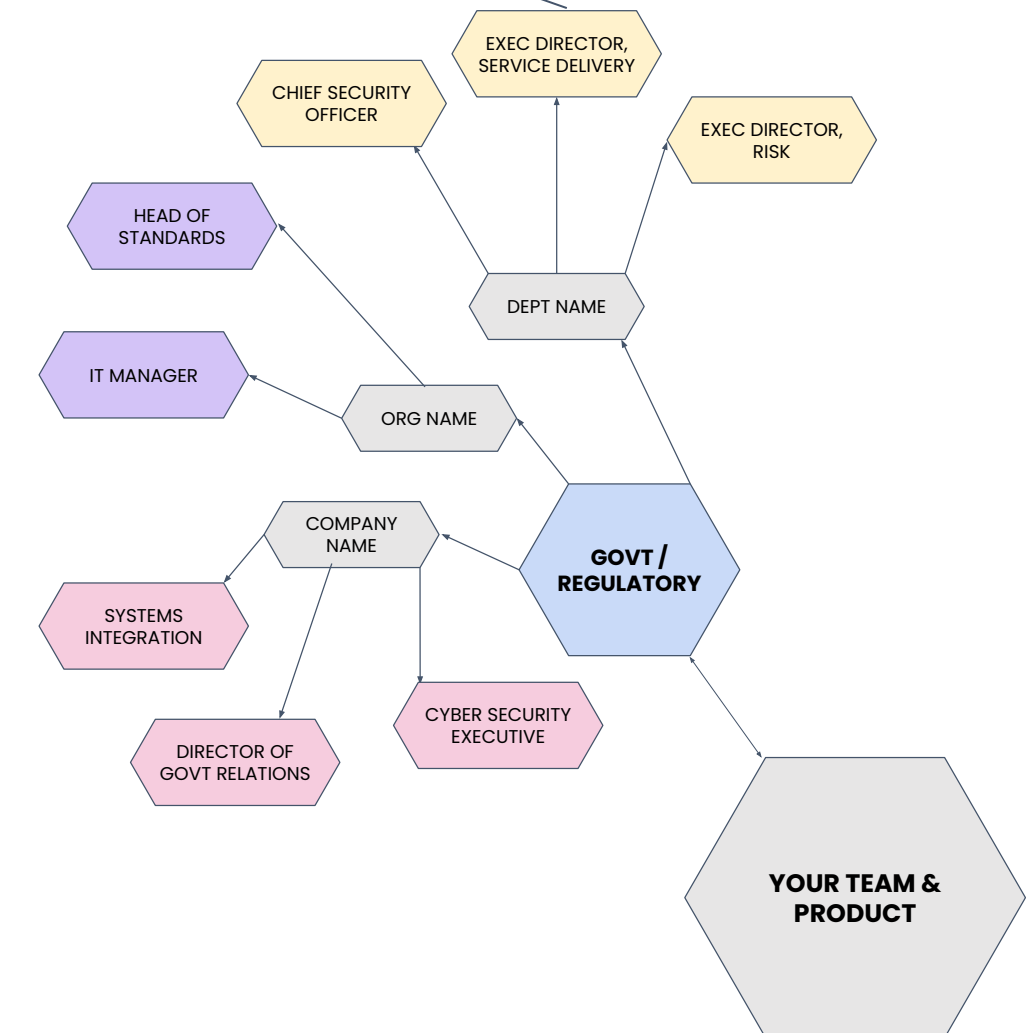
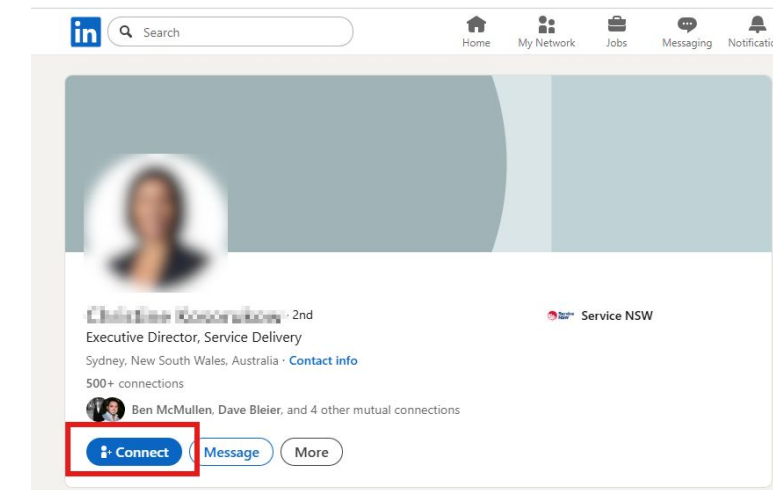


5. Connect with people in those roles

Having identified the relevant buyer roles, you can then begin the process of making connections. This may involve using professional platforms such as LinkedIn, attending industry events, or engaging through established networks.

When reaching out, the goal should not be to make a hard sell immediately, but to initiate genuine conversations that focus on understanding their challenges and needs.

Every interaction should be documented and reflected on, as these conversations reveal insights about how potential customers view their problems and how open they might be to new approaches.



DISCOVERING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

03

Tips to get the best value from Ecosystem Mapping



Create personas

Developing an ideal customer persona in a new market segment can help you to better understand markets to which you've never been exposed. Then use those personas to craft the right message when reaching out.

[Download our Buyer Personas handbook](#)

Think outside the box

Embrace the idea of mapping customer segments that you haven't considered before. Medical and food products might be good for animals as well as people. Financial products might be simplified and used in education as well as business. Construction services might be used in building community projects.

Your goal:

Identify at least two customer segments you haven't previously worked with, and identify the people in those segments who are most likely to benefit from your products and services

Ask:

- What are their pain points?
- How are they currently addressing the problem?
- What might stop them from working with you?



LinkedIn

If you don't already have a LinkedIn account, it's probably worth setting one up. Even if people in your industry don't usually have accounts, it's still useful to understand your ecosystem.

Use LinkedIn to find people in specific roles

Begin with a clear role query that matches how targets actually title themselves, then widen to title variations so you do not miss near matches. Use the location filter to narrow to the markets you serve, add the industry filter, and apply current company where you already have a target list from your map.

Combine quoted titles with function keywords in the main search box, for example quotation marks around Head of Asset Integrity with additional terms like reliability or procurement to surface adjacent decision makers. Save the most useful searches and set alerts so new profiles appear in your feed.

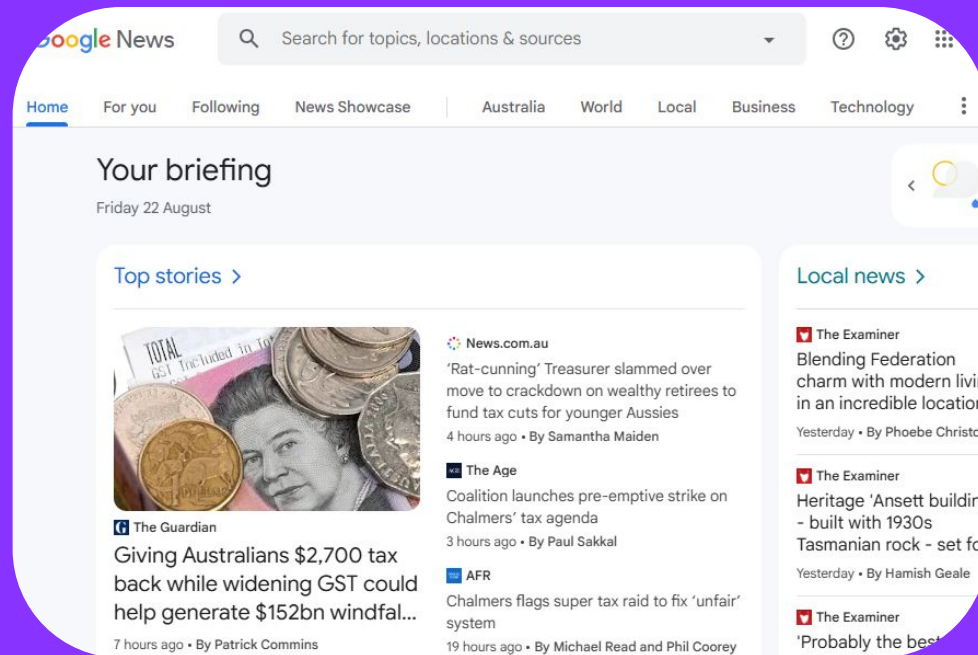
When you view a profile, scan the about and activity sections for current priorities, then send a short message that names the problem you help with and proposes a technical conversation rather than a sales call. Log every outreach and response in your contact tracker so you can measure reply rates and refine your approach

Search Google News for articles quoting leaders

Use Google News (<http://news.google.com/>) to identify executives and managers who speak publicly about the problems you address. Start with quoted role titles and company names inside quotation marks, then add a topic word that signals intent such as maintenance, fatigue, emissions, renewal or compliance.

Sort by date to find current voices and also try the relevance view to surface widely cited pieces. Open the articles and copy the exact quotes that reveal priorities or constraints, then note the person, role, date, publication and the issue they care about.

Build a short paragraph summary for each lead that you can reference in outreach, for example you might say you saw their comments on life extension or inspection cycles and have a proposal that aligns with that concern. This turns a cold contact into a relevant discussion anchored in their own public statements.



Other news sources

If you can't access Google news or are looking for other sources, consider using Reddit (<https://reddit.com/>), Flipboard (<https://about.flipboard.com/>) or Feedly (<https://feedly.com/>) to search for people or commentary about companies.



Finding events

You can use Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/>), Eventfinda (<https://www.eventfinda.com.au/>), or Meetup (<https://www.meetup.com/>) to discover events in a specific industry area. Or you can just look for “what’s on” in a specific geography or domain.

Identify speakers at industry conferences

Conference agendas and call for papers pages are rich sources of named practitioners who already engage with the topics you map. Search for recent agendas in your target sectors, then skim session titles to find talks aligned with your value proposition. Download programmes and capture speaker names, roles and talk abstracts into your contact tracker.

Many events publish recordings or slides, which let you qualify fit before you reach out. When you contact a speaker, reference the session you watched and the specific point they made, then suggest a short exchange to compare notes and test whether a pilot or case study could advance their objectives.

Follow the conference hashtags and lists on the event site to uncover additional contributors and to time your outreach while interest is still fresh.



Find a peak body

Business.gov.au keeps a [register of peak bodies and industry associations](#). You can also check out the Australian Industry Group (<https://www.aigroup.com.au/>) to find a group. And you can look up local Chambers of Commerce that provide location-specific intelligence.

Engage with networks and professional bodies

Map the professional bodies that convene your buyers and influencers, then join the most relevant ones at the appropriate membership level. Attend technical working groups and webinars where practitioners discuss live issues, not only flagship conferences.

Volunteer to share neutral learning or a short case study that demonstrates outcomes without turning the session into a sales pitch. Ask organisers which committees or special interest groups focus on your topic and request an introduction to the convenors. Use member directories to identify contacts, but prioritise warm introductions through organisers or active members you meet at events, since conversion rates are higher when you are vouched for.

Keep a simple cadence of attendance and follow up so you build presence over time rather than appearing only when you want something.



Developing rubrics

Start by identifying attributes of readiness. You may have 4-5 or more attributes. Then for each attribute, describe in detail what good, passable and poor performance looks like, and apply score of 1-5 to those criteria. In reviews, add all scores to determine readiness ranking.

Use a rubric to evaluate stakeholder readiness

Before you invest effort, score each prospect with a simple rubric so you work the best opportunities first. Rate the fit to your value proposition, the urgency of their problem, their influence over others in the ecosystem, and their openness to innovation based on evidence such as pilots or case studies they have run.

Use a three or five point scale for each factor, sum the scores, and set a cut line above which you prioritise active outreach and below which you schedule nurture touches.

Re-score contacts after each interaction as you learn more. The aim is not to be clever, it is to be disciplined, so your team focuses on stakeholders who can move quickly and who signal pull for what you offer.

DISCOVERING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

What happens next?

04

Listen and learn

Customers are not just brand names, or an undifferentiated mass of bodies. They are people. They have unique needs.

Once you've mapped the ecosystem and have made connections with potential customers, it's important to hear how they work, what pain points they have and learn more about what products and services they currently use to meet their needs.

It's not about selling. It's about understanding how you can shape your product to better meet their needs than the competition. So don't go hard and try to sell at the beginning of your connection with new potential customers. Try a conversation where you listen, instead.

Read more about this in our Customer Conversations handbook.





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