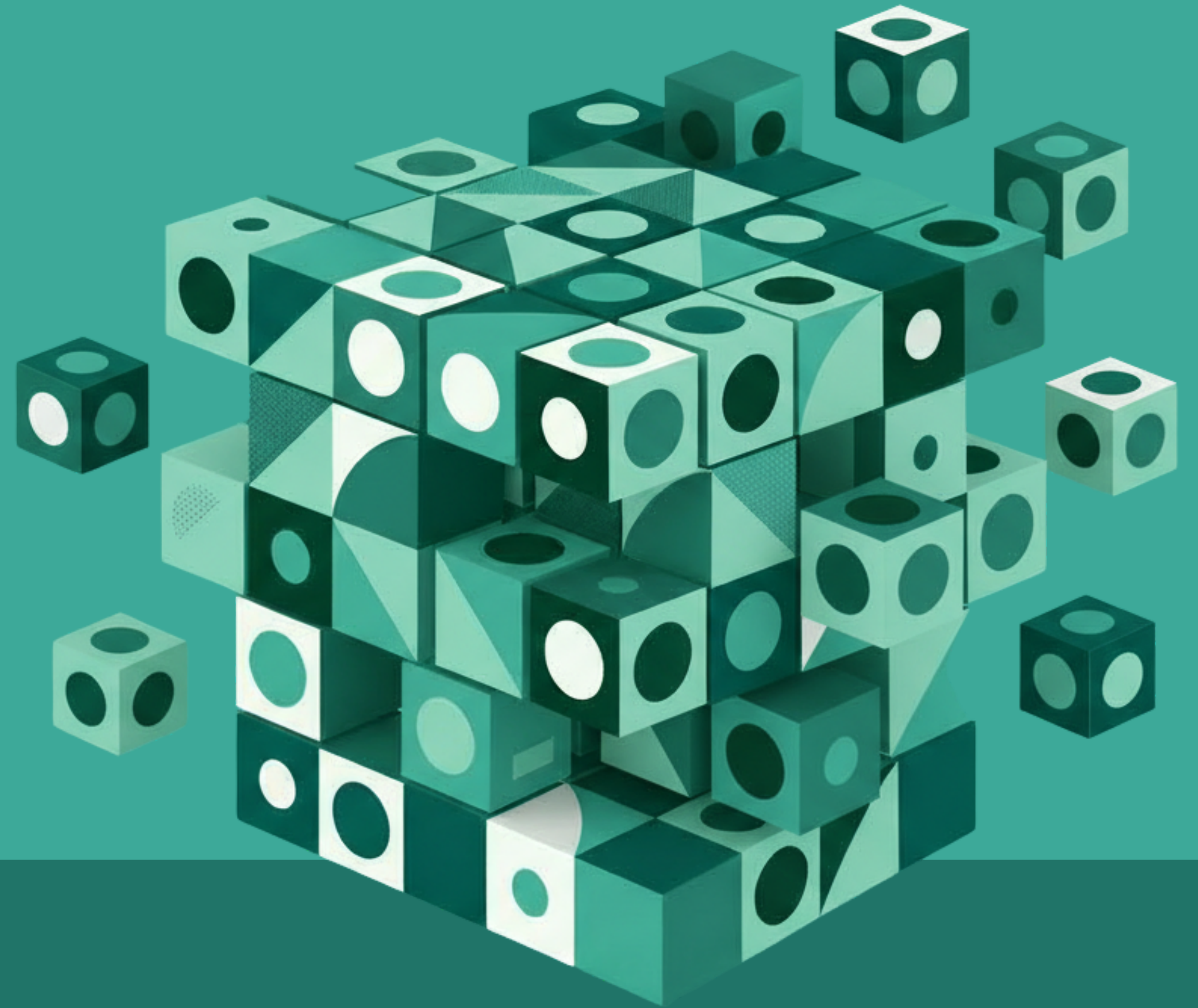


Toolkit: *Identifying your organization's impact superpowers*



December 2025

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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Every organization possesses unique strengths that hold potential to drive transformative impact. When applied effectively, these act as superpowers.

As all impact leaders know, resources and capacity are not infinite; so clarity of purpose and an effective filter for decision-making are essential. Whether you are leveraging innovative technologies, tapping unique expertise, mobilizing extensive networks, or amplifying a trusted brand, understanding your organization's superpowers allows you to target efforts where they can make the greatest difference.

This toolkit is designed to guide leaders through an exploration of organizational strengths, resources, and opportunities. Through practical frameworks, self-assessment tools, and illustrative examples, use this resource to identify and elevate the capabilities that have the most potential to effect positive change.



WHY – AND WHEN – TO ASSESS YOUR SUPERPOWERS

You're starting a strategy refresh

When refreshing your organization's strategy, identifying your superpowers provides clarity on where you can create the most impact. By aligning your unique strengths with real world needs, you can craft a focused and durable roadmap.

You need to improve internal alignment and stakeholder buy-in

Clarifying your superpowers helps build consensus among teams and stakeholders by highlighting shared opportunities and priorities.

You want to present more credibly and stand out in the field

Understanding your superpowers enables you to communicate your unique value proposition authentically to partners, funders, and communities. This clarity and credibility enhances trust, deepens relationships, and positions your organization as a distinctive and reliable leader in the social impact space.

You're defining your ecosystem fit and initiating catalytic collaborations

Identifying your superpowers allows you to better understand your role within the broader ecosystem of social impact organizations. By leveraging your strengths, you can forge collaborations that complement the capabilities of others, creating partnerships that produce collective outcomes.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This is not a linear workbook. Pick and choose the tools that meet your needs. Some are best for deep reflection, others for group workshops. Some help you look inward, others outward.

Use this table as your quick-start guide.

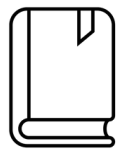
If you're...	Start with...	Then consider...
Refreshing or rethinking your social impact strategy	Impact Wings	SWOT, 360 Review
Looking to better understand your unique assets and capabilities for impact	Asset Map	360 Review, Impact Wings
Preparing for a new initiative, partnership, or collaboration	Asset Map	SWOT, Impact Wings
Trying to align internal teams on shared strengths and priorities	Impact Wings	SWOT, Asset Map
Gathering feedback on how your impact efforts are perceived internally or externally	360 Review	SWOT, Post-Mortem
Learning from a completed initiative, or wrapping up a phase of work	Post-Mortem	360 Review, Asset Map
Pressure-testing your positioning in a rapidly changing landscape	SWOT	Impact Wings, 360 Review
Identifying opportunities for ecosystem leadership or catalytic partnerships	Impact Wings	Asset Map, 360 Review

Exercise 1

Social Impact SWOT

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

A multinational utility company with a growing impact mandate is preparing for a board strategy session focused on climate justice. The social impact team leads a Social Impact SWOT with leaders from operations, legal, and community engagement. The session surfaces overlooked strengths (longstanding utility access programs) and urgent weaknesses (low awareness of community reinvestment efforts). This analysis helps the team refine priorities for a new equitable energy access strategy.



READY-TO-USE MATERIALS:

[Social impact SWOT analysis template](#)

GOAL:

Create a holistic view of the organization's social impact in order to enable clearer strategic decision-making going forward.

BEST USED WHEN:

- You're launching or revisiting your social impact strategy
- You're preparing for strategic planning, board meetings, or external engagement
- You want to pressure-test your impact posture in a shifting external environment
- You need a shared view across departments of what's helping or hindering progress

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED:

- Core social impact team
- Cross-functional leaders (e.g., communications, innovation, HR, operations, legal)
- Select external advisors or close partners (optional)
- A facilitator to guide discussion and synthesis (optional)

TIME NEEDED:

- Team discussion: 60–90 minutes
- Synthesis and follow-up: 2–3 hours

Exercise 1

Social Impact SWOT

PROCESS:

- **Set the stage**
Clarify that this is a strategy-oriented conversation. The goal is to learn, align, and act.
- **Work through each SWOT category**
- **Summarize and prioritize**
 - Use the final section to distill and clarify:
 - Your top 2–3 strengths to lean into
 - Our most urgent internal constraints
 - External opportunities you should move on now
 - External risks to monitor or proactively address

CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE:

- Do this exercise in light of a **specific strategic question** (e.g., "Are we positioned to scale impact in the next 2 years?") for sharper insights.
- **Embrace debate.** The friction between perspectives is always important to address, and may yield important unlocks.
- **Capture nuance.** Not every factor is clearly positive or negative; note tensions and tradeoffs.
- Use it to **support alignment.** This can be a powerful tool for building internal agreement on what matters most.
- **Make it actionable.** Build next steps into your strategic roadmap.
- **Consider revisiting** this analysis annually or during major strategy pivots

Exercise 2

Asset and Resource Mapping

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

A global food and beverage brand is seeking to expand its impact around sustainable agriculture. The social impact team uses the Asset and Resource Map to identify high-leverage assets across business units. During this process, they uncover an internal farmer-training platform developed by the supply chain team, along with longstanding relationships with local co-ops in Latin America.

As they assess these assets, they realize the platform is already seen as a key contributor to product quality and brand differentiation — a core business priority. Moreover, procurement and marketing leaders recognize the reputational value of engaging farming communities in more meaningful ways. With support from sustainability, brand, and regional leadership, the team develops a cross-functional plan to scale this platform in partnership with a global NGO.

GOAL:

Identify and categorize internal assets in order to gain a comprehensive view of organizational strengths, better understand potential contributions to impact work, and to broker stronger ecosystem collaboration.

BEST USED WHEN:

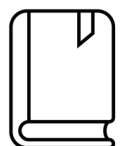
- You're trying to align internal stakeholders around your social impact potential
- You're launching or refining a shared value strategy
- You need to map organizational strengths to emerging impact opportunities
- You're preparing to engage in cross-sector collaboration and want to bring real assets to the table

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED:

- Core social impact team
- Business unit leaders (product, innovation, operations, HR, etc.)
- Legal, marketing, data/tech, or other relevant enabling functions
- Strategy, partnerships, or executive leadership stakeholders
- A facilitator to guide discussion and synthesis (optional)

TIME NEEDED:

- Initial completion: 2–3 hours for a small working group
- Cross-functional review: 1–2 weeks, depending on how widely you circulate
- Full asset mapping and prioritization: ~2–4 weeks for deeper evaluation and action planning



READY-TO-USE MATERIALS:
[Asset and resource map template](#)

Exercise 2

Asset and Resource Mapping

PROCESS:

Define what counts as an “Asset”

- Use a broad definition to include intellectual property, relationships, technologies, distribution channels, data, platforms, expertise, or physical infrastructure. Anything the organization has that could be used to create value for impact work.

Complete columns A–C: Identify and categorize assets

- For each asset:
 - Assign it to an asset category (e.g., intellectual property, employee base, data sets)
 - Name the specific asset
 - Note the internal owner(s) (departments or leaders responsible)

Complete columns D–E: Assess business value

- Rate each asset’s value to the business on a scale of 1–5
- Briefly describe the value (e.g., generates revenue, differentiates brand, supports growth)

Complete columns F–G: Assess social impact value

- Rate each asset’s potential value to social impact work on a scale of 1–5
- Describe how the asset could contribute to impact (e.g., reducing barriers, enabling scale, filling gaps in the ecosystem)

Complete columns H–I: Assess availability for impact use

- Rate how available the asset is for social impact work on a scale of 1–5
- Note any constraints or barriers (e.g., IP issues, business sensitivities, resource limitations)
 - Example: “Our proprietary retail data model has high business value (5) and untapped potential for identifying food deserts (impact value = 4), but is currently locked in a commercial licensing agreement (availability = 2).”

Prioritize

- Look across the matrix to identify assets that:
 - Score high on both business and social impact value
 - Are available (or could be made available) for impact use
- These are your high-leverage opportunities. Flag them for deeper exploration, pilot programs, or partnership development.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE:

- **Be specific.** Vague asset definitions (e.g., “our people”) won’t help you make strategic decisions. Break them down by skill set, team, or capability. Sometimes a single individual can be listed as an asset.
- **Look for win-wins.** The best assets to deploy for impact are those that also create or reinforce business value.
- **Keep it alive.** Revisit and update as your business evolves and new opportunities emerge.

Exercise 3

360 Review

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

A cloud computing firm is reevaluating its philanthropic investments after establishing a corporate foundation. The social impact team initiates a 360 Review with internal teams and nonprofit partners. The interviews reveal a disconnect: while internal stakeholders see the firm as a leader in digital equity, external partners find the impact fragmented and lacking long-term commitments. This candid feedback helps the firm consolidate its giving around a more focused, systems-level approach.



READY-TO-USE MATERIALS: [360 Review questionnaire](#)

GOAL:

Gather a wide range of perspectives on organizational strengths and liabilities as they relate to impact work, reducing blindspots and unlocking new vantage points in the process.

BEST USED WHEN:

- You're preparing for a strategic refresh or long-term planning process
- You want to validate or challenge your current impact direction
- You're exploring new areas for investment, partnership, or leadership
- You need external perspectives to identify blind spots or underleveraged assets

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED:

- **Internal stakeholders:**
 - Social impact team
 - Executive leadership
 - Cross-functional colleagues (e.g., DEI, communications, sustainability, operations)
- **External stakeholders:**
 - Partners
 - Funders
 - Grantees
 - Community collaborators
 - Subject-matter experts
 - Beneficiaries
- **A facilitator to guide discussion and synthesis** (optional)

Exercise 3

360 Review

TIME NEEDED:

- Per interview: 30–60 minutes
- Total process: ~3–6 weeks, depending on the number of interviews and how findings are synthesized

PROCESS:

Clarify your purpose

- Start by aligning internally on what you're trying to learn and why. Be transparent with interviewees about your goals for using this feedback.

Select stakeholders

- Identify stakeholders who can offer diverse perspectives (champions and critics alike). Include a balance of internal and external voices.

Customize and conduct Interviews

- Use the tool's four sections as your guide:
 - Strengths: What differentiates your organization and where you've succeeded
 - Opportunities: Where you could grow, expand, or lead
 - Collaboration and feedback: What you could do differently—internally or in partnership
 - Vision: What long-term success looks like in the eyes of your stakeholders
- Ask follow-ups to probe deeper
 - Encourage specificity and candor
 - Document answers thoroughly

Synthesize the insights

- Aggregate themes across interviews. Look for:
 - Patterns and recurring themes
 - Tensions or contradictions
 - Blind spots or surprises

Structure your findings into a short memo or slide deck

Apply and share the learning

- Use the insights to:
 - Refine your strategy
 - Prioritize areas for investment or partnership
 - Address internal barriers
 - Communicate your impact story with more clarity and confidence

Close the loop with interviewees to build trust and signal that their input mattered

CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE:

- **Trust is critical.** If interviewees don't believe you'll act on their feedback, or if they fear blowback, they won't be honest. Make it safe to speak freely.
- **Prepare for uncomfortable truths.** This tool is only useful if you're willing to hear (and confront) what's not working.
- **Context matters.** Interpret feedback in light of the interviewee's relationship to your work. A funder's take on strategy will differ from a frontline partner's.
- **Don't confuse consensus with correctness.** Just because a theme comes up repeatedly doesn't mean it's right. Use judgment, not just frequency.

Exercise 4

Impact Wings

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

A financial institution is launching a new brand campaign focused on inclusive prosperity. The social impact and brand strategy teams convene to do the Impact Wings exercise. They identify distinctive traits like strong community branch networks and deep expertise in financial literacy. They also note the need for economic inclusion in underbanked communities. The result: a new internal purpose statement – “We drive inclusive wealth-building by combining trusted local access with tailored financial tools” – that shapes both messaging and investment priorities.



READY-TO-USE MATERIALS: [Impact Wings template](#)

GOAL:

To define your organization’s unique impact purpose by exploring the intersection between what makes you distinctive and what the world urgently needs. This exercise helps clarify your positioning in the social impact landscape and catalyzes more focused, authentic strategy and storytelling.

BEST USED WHEN:

- You’re shaping or refining your organization’s social impact purpose or strategy
- You’re preparing for a rebrand, initiative launch, or new narrative
- You want to spark alignment among internal teams on what makes your impact work meaningful and differentiated
- You’re facilitating a workshop or offsite session focused on strategic clarity or storytelling
- You’re making the case for why you have landed on a certain area of focus or initiative

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED:

This depends on the context. As a core workshopping tool, you can use it with anybody to guide brainstorming — particularly your core social impact team.

Plus, it has additional communications value — to share out where you landed and why, with audiences including:

- Communications and brand leaders
- Executive sponsors or internal champions
- Cross-functional team members with strong insight into organizational strengths

Exercise 4

Impact Wings

TIME NEEDED:

- 45 minutes (individual or core team exercise): 30 minutes to brainstorm and fill out each side; 15 minutes to share back ideas and complete the framework together
- Plus time outside of the session, to use the inputs as stimulus for ideation on possible purpose statements that come from that work

PROCESS:

Frame the exercise: The goal is to identify the unique value you bring to solving critical, urgent, or underserved problems in the world. This sits at the intersection of two forces:

- Distinctiveness: What's special about your organization
- Relevance: What the world needs right now

Fill in the impact wings

Wing 1: What's special about us?

- **Consider the qualities that set your organization apart:**
 - Key assets, skills, products or services
 - Cultural characteristics, leadership traits, attitudes
 - Influence through partnerships, programs, brand and reputation
 - Employee power: What they are passionate about, skilled in, motivated by

- Impact legacy: Where have you got momentum, credibility, and relationships
- Shared value: What do leadership support? What is built into the business? Are there other stakeholders influences that should factor in?
- **Ask:** What do we have or do that few others can match?
 - Consider doing a landscape review of peers/competitors/best in class examples to see what you can learn from and where your unique opportunities lie
 - Consider gathering inputs through interviews and surveys

Wing 2: What does the world need?

- **Explore the societal trends and unmet needs that align with your strengths:**
 - Urgent or systemic problems related to your organization
 - Sentiment and needs of your employees / customers / communities where you work and live
 - Trends and future threats to your industry and communities
 - Communities that you intersect with that are underserved
 - Gaps other organizations are failing to address
- **Ask:** What are the problems we feel compelled to solve and are uniquely positioned to tackle?

Exercise 4

Impact Wings

Find the intersection: Your Impact Purpose

- In the center, synthesize the strongest themes from each wing into a clear, memorable statement of why your organization's work matters and where it should be focused. This is your draft impact purpose.
 - Example: "We exist to close digital equity gaps in underserved U.S. schools by combining trusted community presence with adaptable, low-cost tech solutions."
 - Hint: Make it inspiring, specific, and short enough to stick.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE:

- This **doesn't need to be perfectly worded** at first. Focus on clarity of thought over polished language.
- **Avoid generalities** like "we care" or "we want to help." What exactly do you bring? What problem, exactly, are you built to solve?
- **Invite tension.** Sometimes what makes you distinctive doesn't align with what the world most needs or vice versa. Name and explore those divergences.
- **Revisit this worksheet** as your organization grows, markets shift, or new challenges emerge.
- **Don't treat this as a branding exercise only.** This tool can drive other decisions around investment, partnerships, innovation, and advocacy.

Exercise 5

Social Impact Initiative Post-Mortem

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

An automotive company recently concluded a 12-month initiative aimed at increasing access to STEM careers for underserved high school students in urban areas. The program included hands-on workshops, mentorship from engineers, and summer internships at innovation labs.

Following the program’s conclusion, the social impact team leads a post-mortem involving education partners, employee mentors, and HR leaders. The session highlights major successes, like strong student engagement and positive media coverage, but also uncovers challenges: mentor participation waned in the second half of the year, and internship conversions into long-term pipelines were unclear.

Importantly, HR sees untapped potential for aligning this initiative with talent acquisition goals, particularly around diversity in engineering roles. Based on this reflection, the team refines its program design, strengthens cross-department collaboration, and introduces a new pathway from student internships to early career roles. The post-mortem transforms a successful pilot into a more strategic, integrated talent and impact initiative.

GOAL: _____

Evaluate existing or completed social impact initiatives, noting successes, challenges, and learnings in order to reveal patterns of effectiveness and areas with untapped potential.

BEST USED WHEN: _____

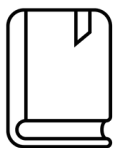
- After a program wraps
- When transitioning into a new planning cycle
- During a strategic pause or reflection point

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED: _____

- Core team that led the initiative
- Relevant stakeholders (e.g., community partners, funders, internal sponsors)
- A facilitator to guide discussion and synthesis (optional)

TIME NEEDED: _____

- 60–90 minutes for team discussion + time to document findings



READY-TO-USE MATERIALS:
[Social impact initiative evaluation tool](#)

Exercise 5

Social Impact Initiative Post-Mortem

PROCESS:

Complete the tool, section by section

- The post-mortem can be completed individually or collaboratively as a group

Once the tool is filled out, hold a post-mortem debrief session:

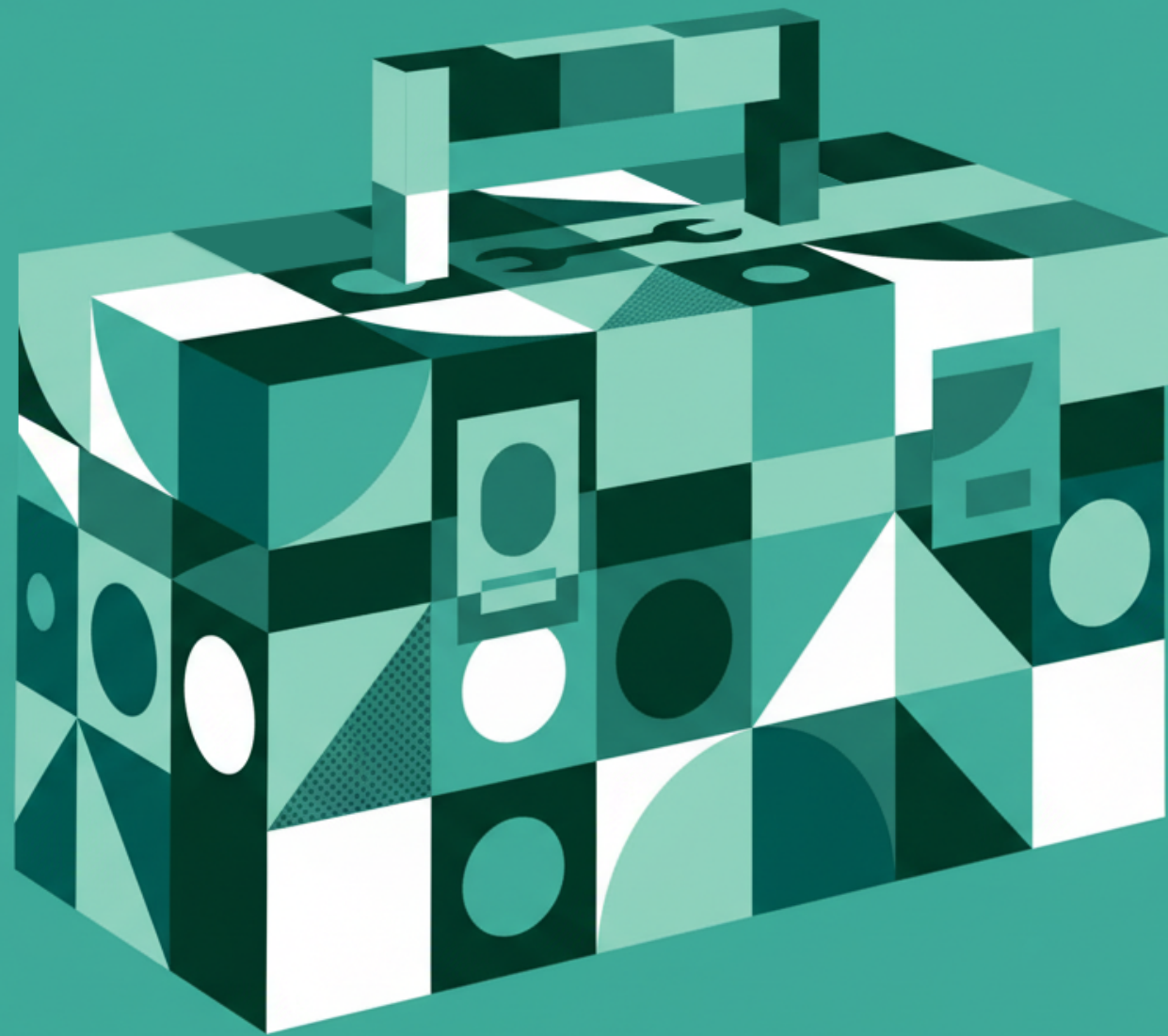
- Share the highlights of each section
- Discuss tensions or gaps
- Agree on what to carry forward and what to stop doing

Archive and apply

- Save completed evaluations in a shared knowledge system
- Revisit these before launching new programs
- Use insights to refine strategies, training, resourcing, and partnerships

CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE:

- **Encourage honesty and candor** among participants.
- **Include diverse perspectives**, especially from those closest to implementation or impact.
- Focus on identifying **areas for improvement**.
- **Keep it lean**. If a section doesn't apply, skip it. But don't skip the exercise entirely.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO CONSIDER

Looking for more great NationSwell resources and tools? Check out our [Impact Kit on Strategy Development](#).

The Impact Kit is designed to help you:

- Get up to speed quickly on timely insights and emerging practices surfaced from across the NationSwell community.
- Identify key resources to support your work, and to share with colleagues and partners.
- Know where and how to go deeper, with new ideas for how to engage further with NationSwell in support of your goals.

And don't miss these NationSwell case studies featuring superpower-driven impact initiatives:

- [Cisco | Skills-to-jobs at scale](#)
- [Chobani | Impact through product innovation](#)
- [Visa Foundation | Growing the economic pie](#)
- [LinkedIn | Bridging skills & network gaps](#)
- [New York Life | From classrooms to cubicles](#)
- [PepsiCo | Feeding potential](#)



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Please don't hesitate to reach out
if you have questions or feedback!

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