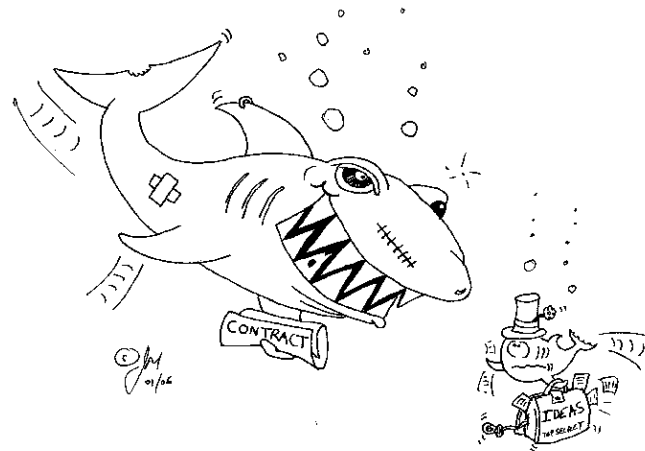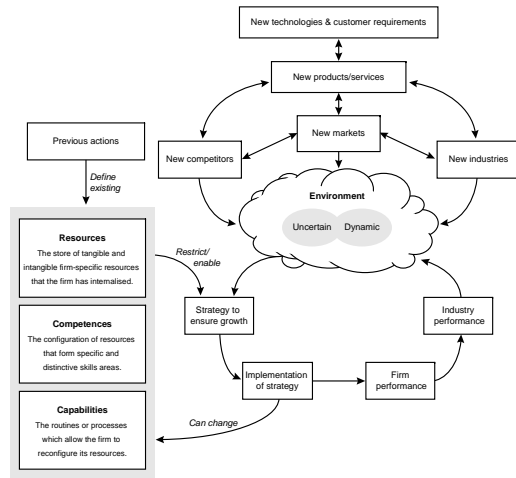# Example research projects using case studies

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Aims of this session

- Show examples of case study research

- Highlight some considerations for your case study research

Main elements of a research project

- Broad research area / outline research question
- Literature review
- Refined research question
- Research method
- Data acquisition
- Analysis
- Conclusions

What is the point of a case study?

Some examples

"Japanese innovation strategy and the acquisition of UK IT firms"

PhD Research Project

ESRC Funded

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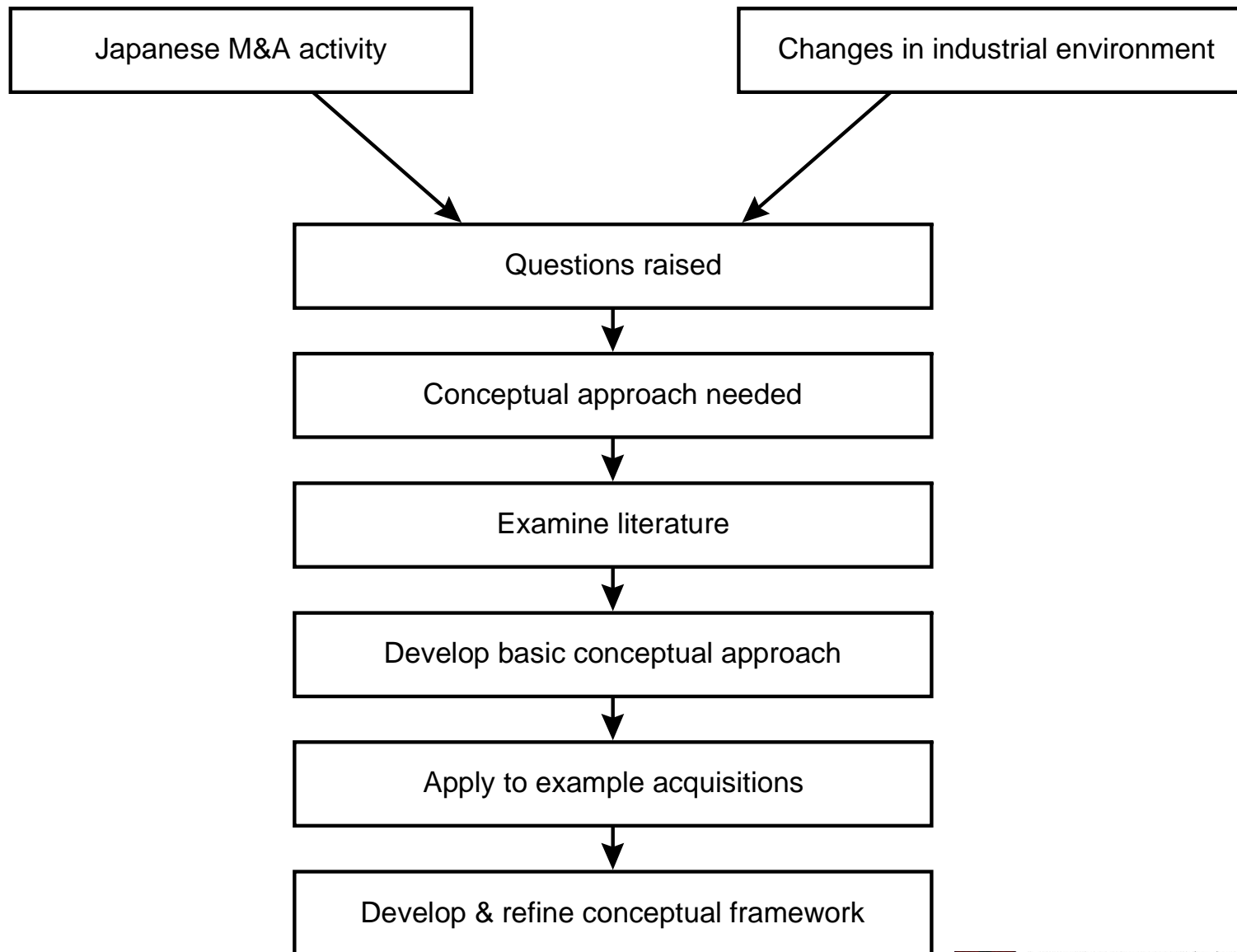
Project background

- In early 1990s, a number of UK information technology firms were acquired by the Japanese firms.

- This activity attracted attention as:

  - Japanese internationalisation focused upon JVs and greenfield sites

  - Japanese companies inexperienced at managing international acquisitions

  - Use of acquisitions for strategic reasons very difficult

```
┌─────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│   Japanese M&A activity │              │  Changes in industrial environment│
└─────────────────────────┘              └──────────────────────────────────┘
                    ╲                       ╱
                     ╲                     ╱
                      ▼                   ▼
              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
              │         Questions raised        │
              └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
              │     Conceptual approach needed  │
              └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
              │        Examine literature       │
              └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
              │  Develop basic conceptual approach │
              └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
              │    Apply to example acquisitions │
              └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
              ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
              │ Develop & refine conceptual framework │
              └─────────────────────────────────┘
```

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Theoretical view

- 'Mainstream' strategy
- Management of innovation
- Management of acquisitions

- **Didn't really help explain!**

- Resource-based view of the firm
- Development of simple model
  - testing?

What was required?

- Assess evidence required to investigate research question in light of conceptual approach developed

- Consider methods appropriate to obtaining evidence

Research strategy	Form of research questions
Experiment	how, why?
Survey	who, what, where, how many, how much?
Archival analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much?
History	how, why?
Case study	how, why?

Source: Adapted from Yin (1994)

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Use of cases for theory building

"[..] theory building from case study research is particularity appropriate because theory building does not rely upon previous literature or prior empirical evidence."

Source: Eisenhardt (1989).

Types of case study

	Single-case designs	Multiple-case designs
Single unit of analysis	Type 1	Type 2
Multiple units of analysis	Type 3	Type 4

Source: Yin, 1994

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But how many?

Use of case studies

- ".. case studies should be evaluated in terms of the adequacy of the theoretical inferences that can be generated. The **aim is not to infer findings from a sample to a population, but to engender patterns and linkages of theoretical importance.**"

  Source: Bryman (1989:173)

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Multiple case study design

Define & design　　　　　　**Prepare, collect & analyse**　　　**Analyse & conclude**
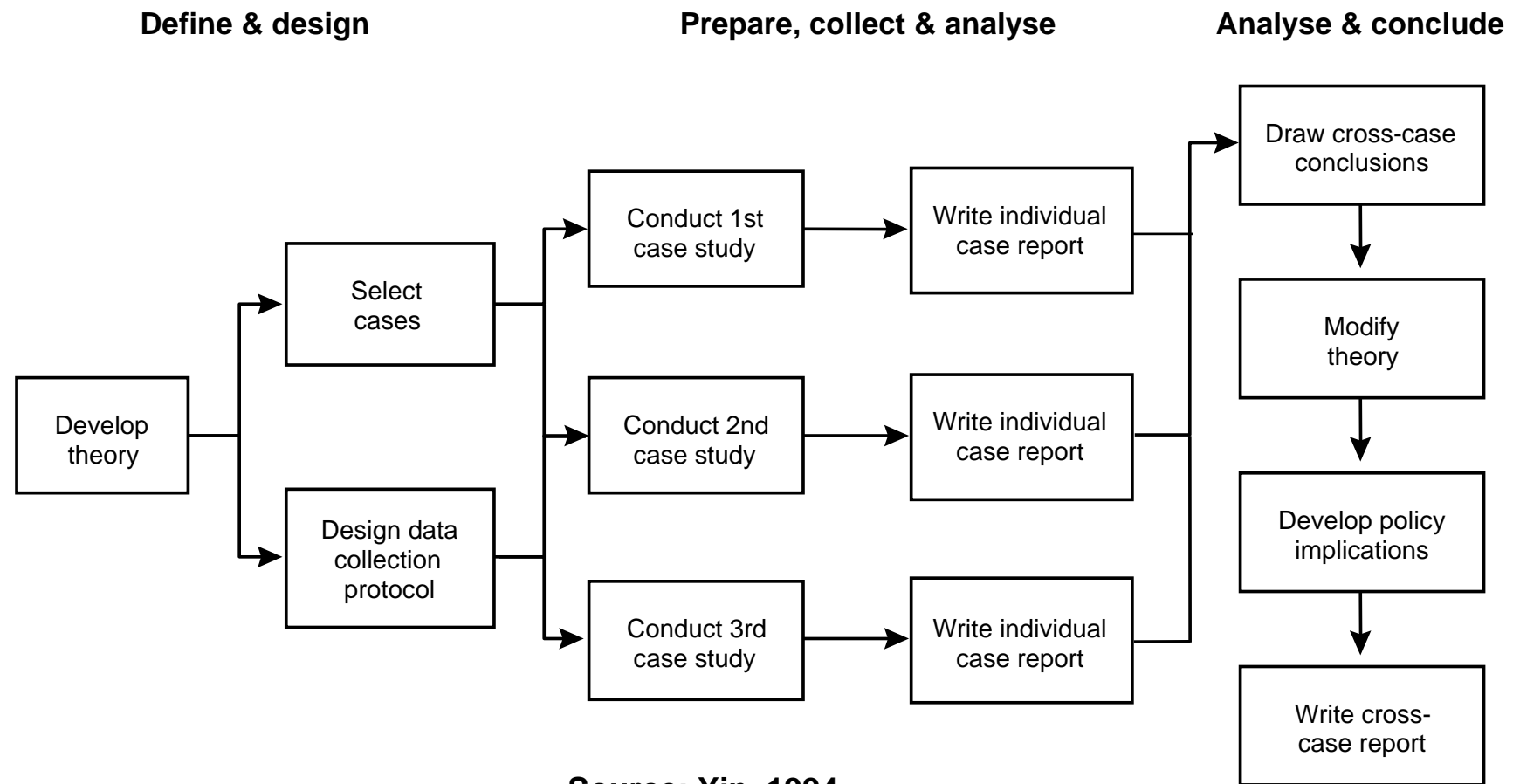
Source: Yin, 1994

Sources of data

Source of data	Examples include:
Documentation	Letters, minutes of meetings, reports, newspaper articles.
Archival records	Service records, survey data, organisational records.
Interviews	Open ended interviews, focused interviews, structured interviews.
Direct observations	Site observations (including meetings, factory work).
Participant observation	Researcher assumes role within case study situation.
Physical artefacts	Physical devices, tools or instruments which are collected or observed.

Source: Yin, 1994

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Primary versus secondary data

- **Primary** - data specifically acquired for the present programme of research

- **Secondary** - data collected for some other purpose and kept archived in some form
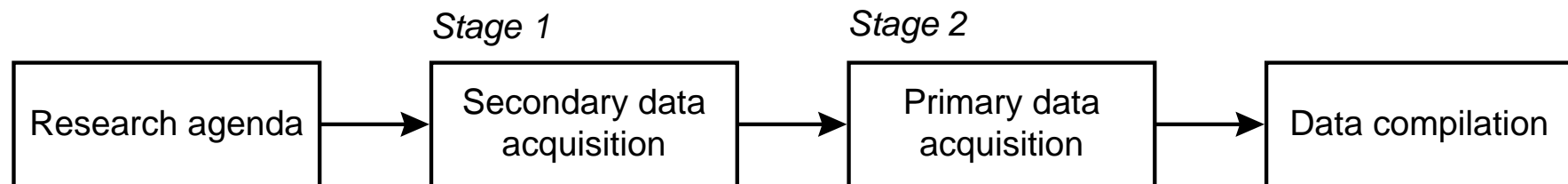
Matrix of options for sources

	Primary	Secondary
Internal		
External		

Matrix of options

	Primary	**Secondary**
Internal	**Interviews with Japanese parent company personnel**	Parent company information sources Previous case studies related to parent company
	Interviews with UK subsidiary personnel	
External	Interviews with competitors Interviews with financiers Interviews with journalists	Public sector information services News archives Commercial industry reports

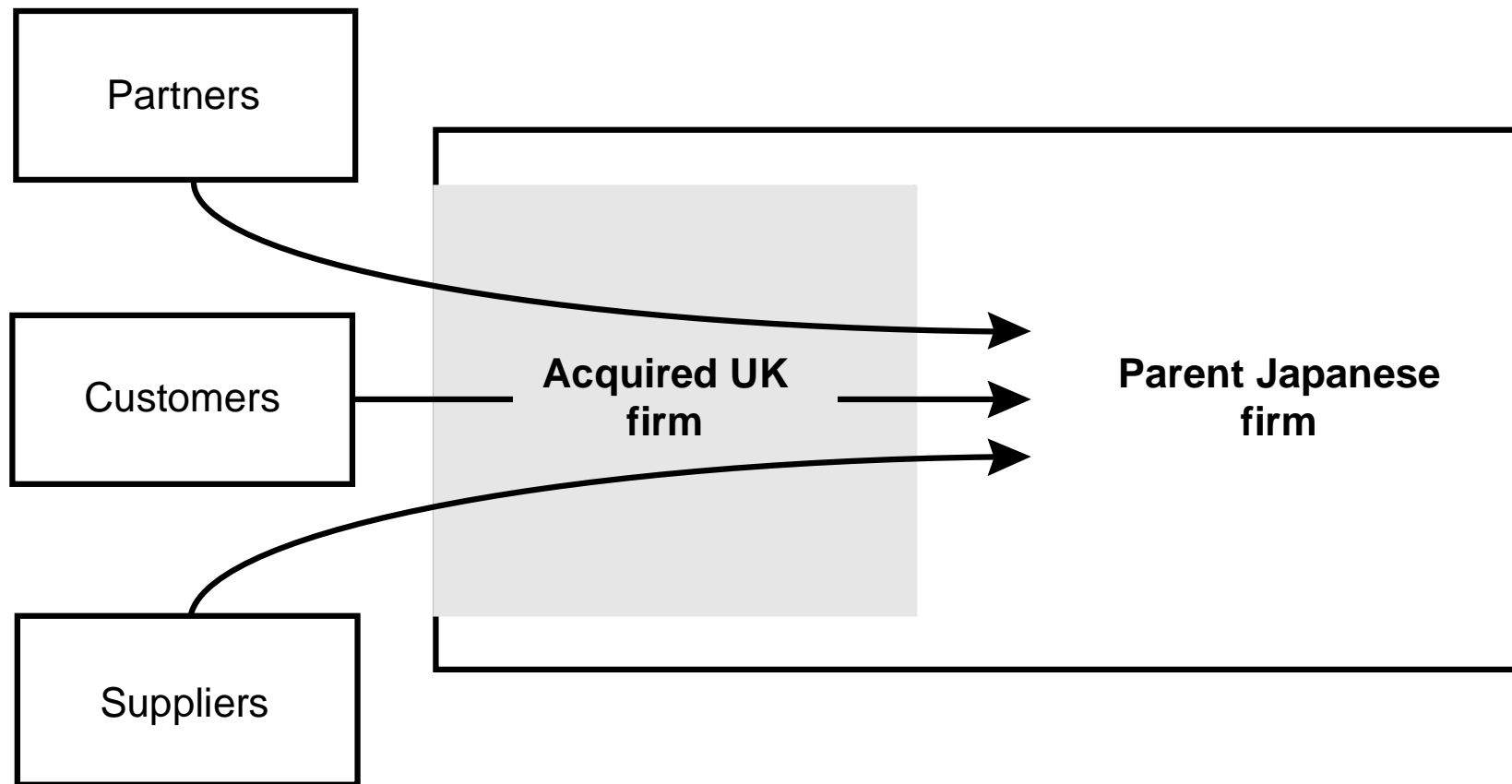|	*Case A*	*Case B*	*Case C*
Japanese parent firm	**Fujitsu**	**Mitsubishi Electric**	**Kao Corporation**
Business areas	Communication systems, computer systems, electronic devices.	IT systems, heavy electrical machinery, consumer electronics.	Detergents, cosmetics, fatty chemicals, edible oils, IT products.
Approximate sales at time of acquisition / £m	12,000	15,000	2,700
Acquired UK firm	**ICL**	**Apricot Computers Ltd (hardware division)**	**Protoscan Software Services**
Business areas	Computer systems, computer services.	Computer systems.	Software support services.
Approximate sales at time of acquisition / £m	1,600	81	3.4*

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Data collection protocol

Stage 1   *Stage 2*

| Research agenda | → | Secondary data acquisition | → | Primary data acquisition | → | Data compilation |

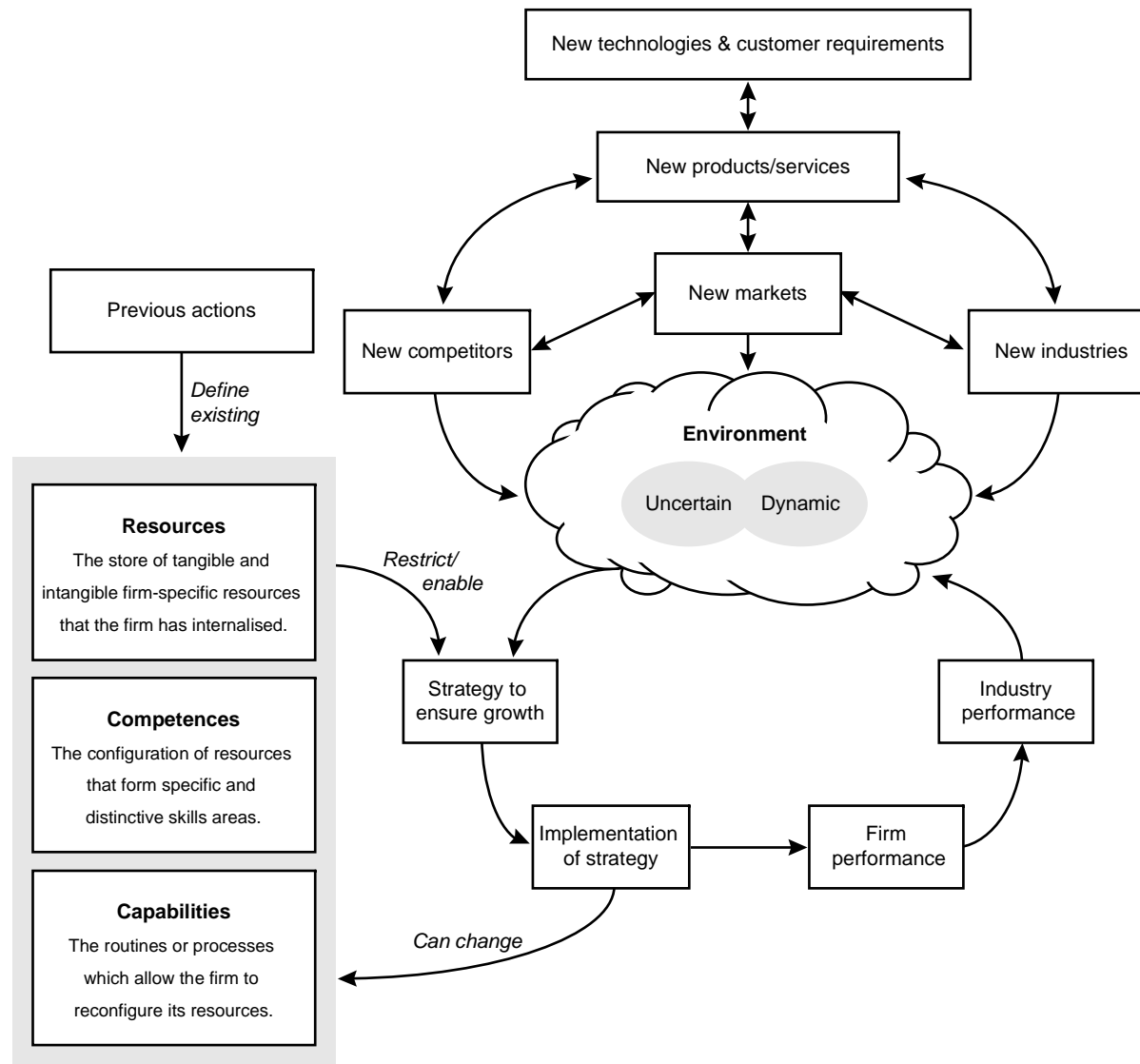|	**Positivist viewpoint**	**Phenomenological viewpoint**
Validity	Does the instrument measure what it is supposed to measure?	Has the researcher gained full access to the knowledge and meanings of informants?
Reliability	Will the measure yield the same results on different occasions (Assuming no real change in what is to be measured)?	Will similar observations be made by different researchers on different occasions?
Generalisability	What is the probability that patterns observed in a sample will also be present in the wider population from which the sample is drawn?	How likely is it that ideas and theories generated in one setting will also apply in other settings?

Source: Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1991

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Case studies showed …

Partners

Customers

Suppliers

Acquired UK firm

Parent Japanese firm

Results

- New framework for linking RBV of firm with development of organisational capability to respond to rapidly changing environment

- Move from theory building to theory testing

New technologies & customer requirements

New products/services

New markets

Previous actions

Define existing

New competitors

New industries

Environment

Uncertain   Dynamic

Resources

The store of tangible and intangible firm-specific resources that the firm has internalised.

Restrict/ enable

Strategy to ensure growth

Industry performance

Competences

The configuration of resources that form specific and distinctive skills areas.

Implementation of strategy

Firm performance

Capabilities

The routines or processes which allow the firm to reconfigure its resources.

Can change

"Manufacturing Mobility"

Post-doctoral research project
EPSRC Funded

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Project overview

- Audit manufacturing plants between transfer is planned

- Map conditions for transfer and receipt

- Develop generalisable project management framework

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Methodology

- Empirical evidence to build initial framework
  - Survey
  - Case studies
- Testing through application
  - Tools and techniques

- Survey
  - Missed the 'richness' of detail of transfer
- Case studies
  - Provided richness but are they generalisable?

Cases included:

- Camelot lottery terminals
- Biscuit making machinery
- Control devices
- Telecommunications equipment

- Telecommunications devices
- IT software duplicating technology
- Power generation systems
- Electrical components

	Exploring	Evaluating	Packaging and adapting	Transferring	Embedding	Feeding back
Facilities						
Suppliers						
Material control						
HR						
Knowledge						
Organisat.						
Quality						
External environ.						

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Results

- Case studies provided empirical evidence to develop framework
- Framework developed into workbook
- Workbook applied in industry
- On-going refinement
- Spin-off projects

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Practical workbooks to help you improve your business...

Based on collaborative research with industry

Three workbooks to guide you through the pitfalls of international transfers...

Manufacturing Mobility   Price 49.50
- a strategic guide to transferring manufacturing capability

Provides a guide to the total process of moving manufacturing capability to a new location. Senior managers who have strategic responsibility for the transfer of production technology will find the structured approach to planning a transfer invaluable in order to avoid the many pitfalls associated with such projects. The workbook describes the total transfer process from its initial conception as part of the business strategy right through to the point when the transferred technology is operating successfully in its new location.

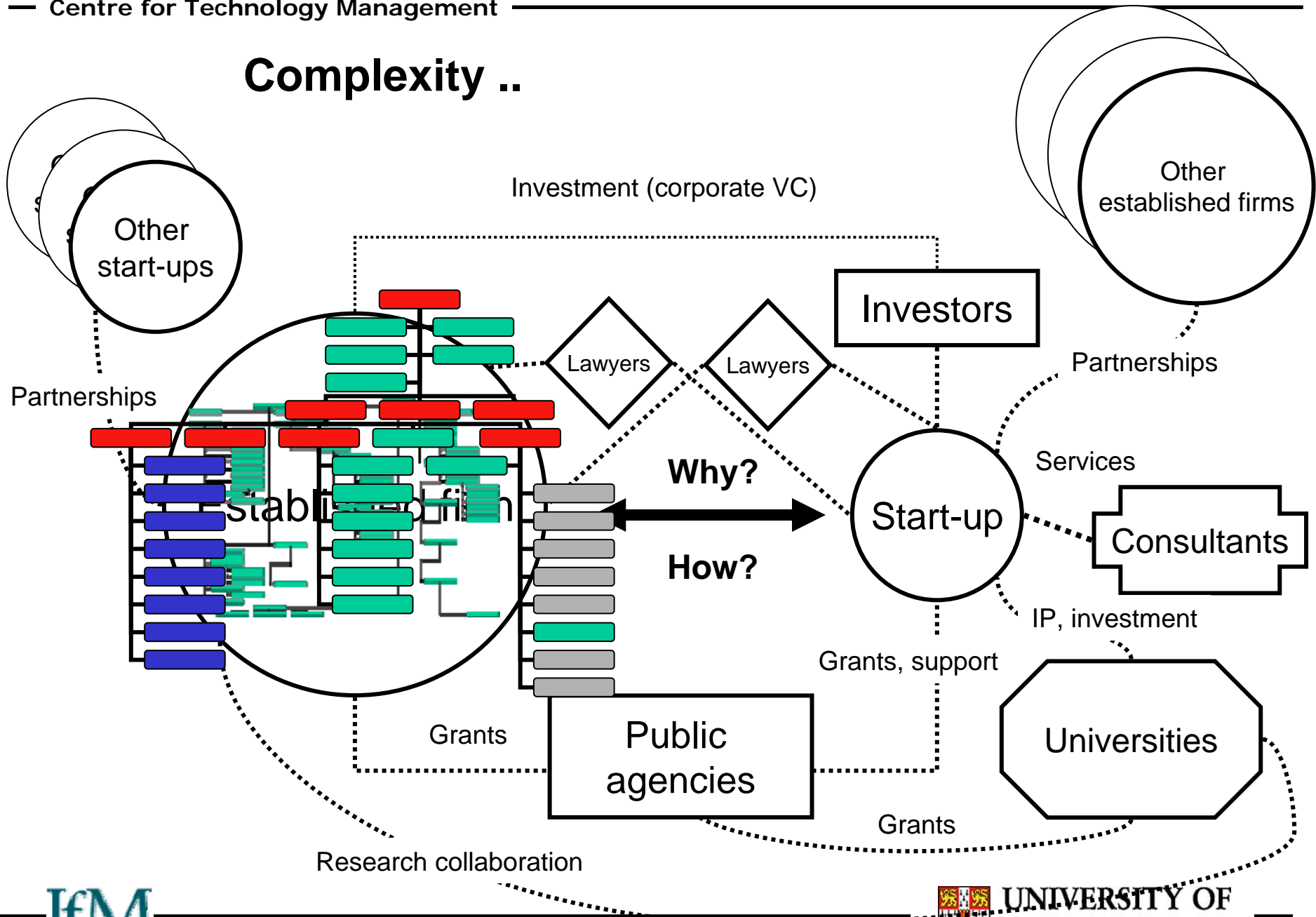Structure, approach, experiences,..   Business model, financing, growth, ..

Established firm   **Why?** → **Start-up**

How?
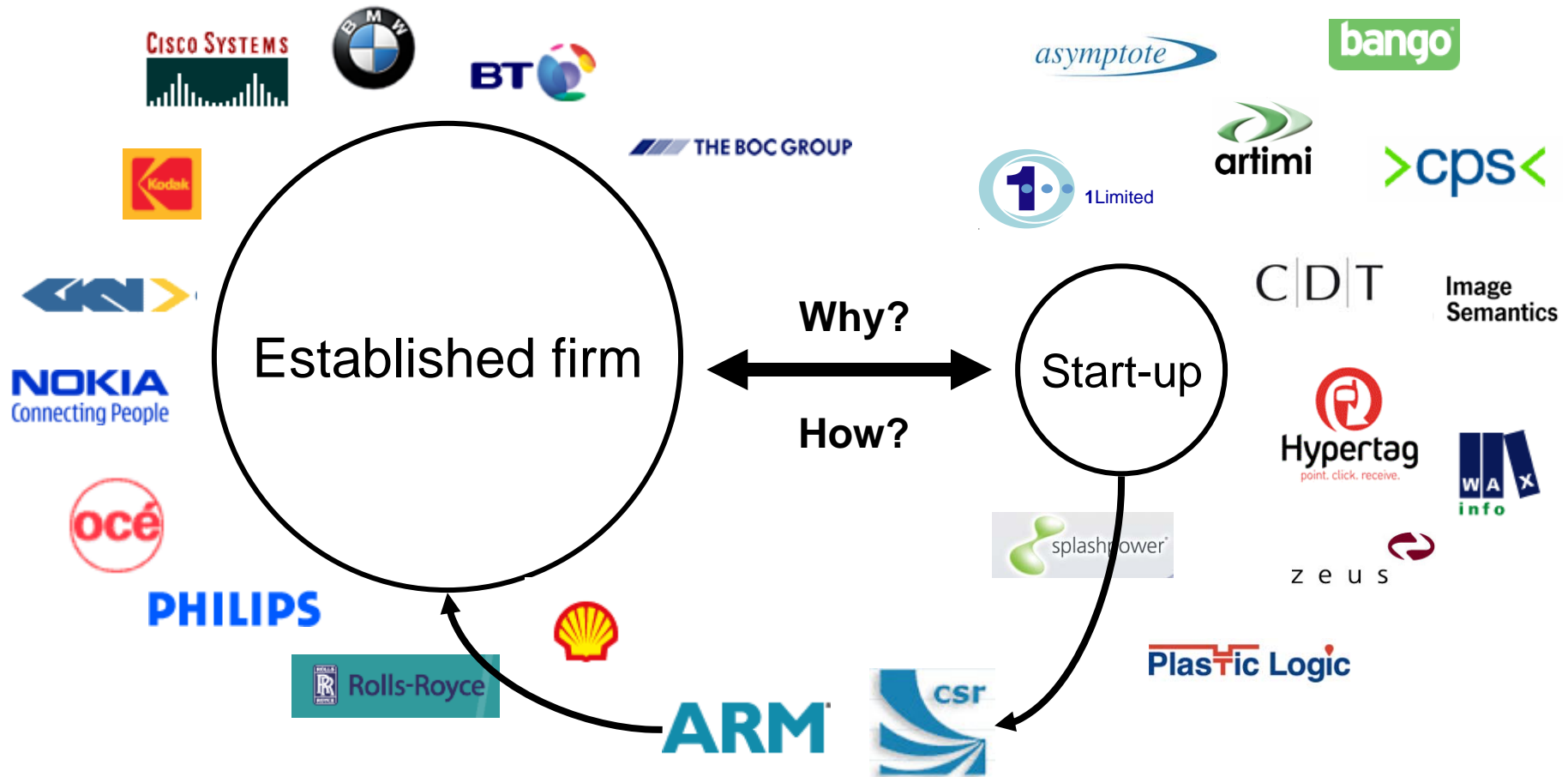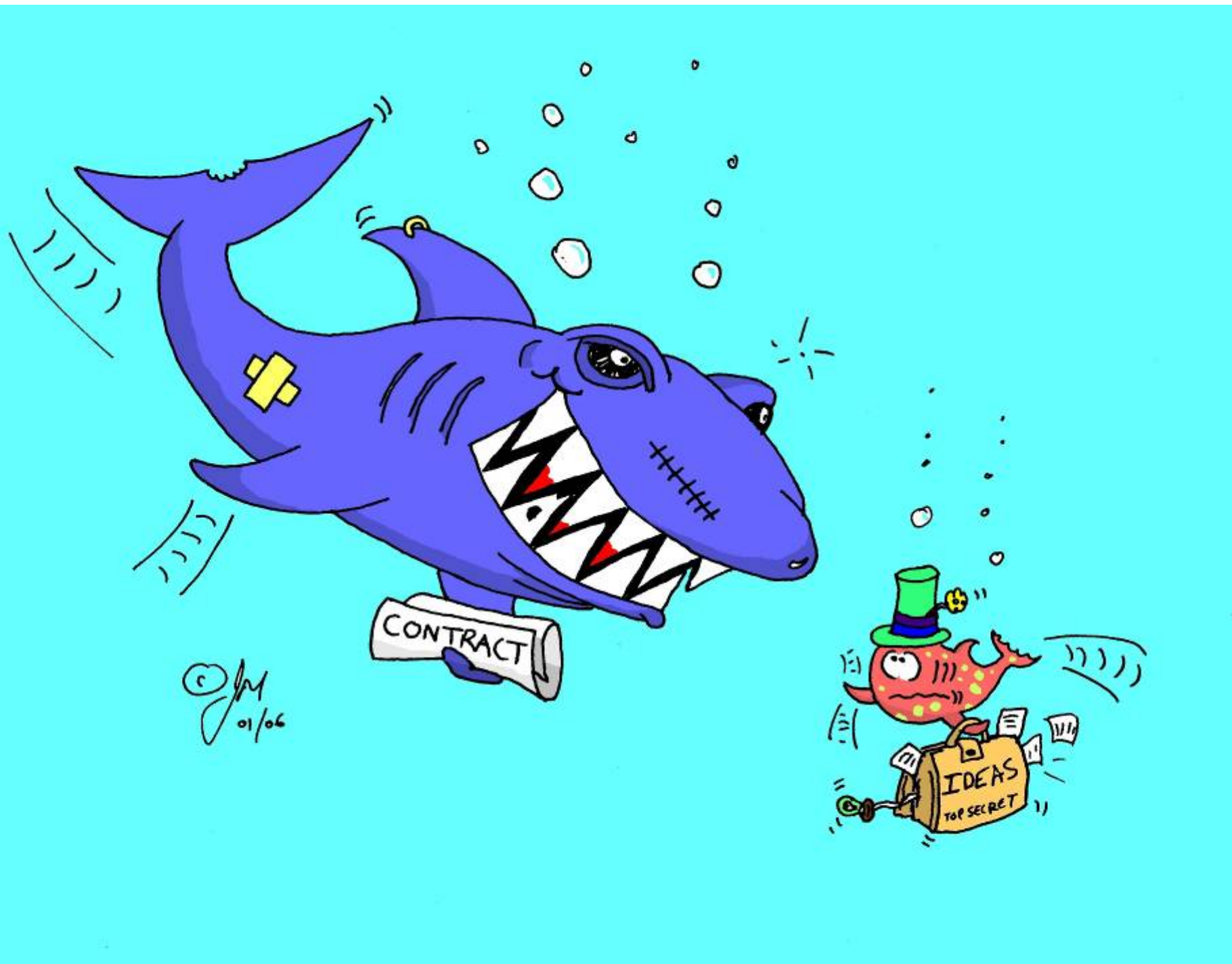
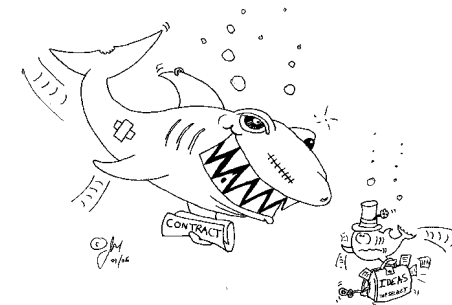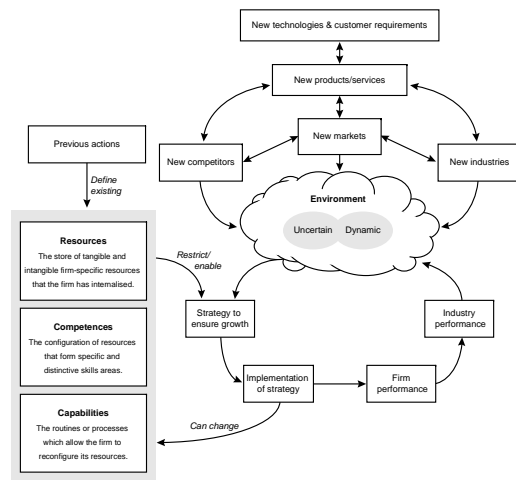| A large firm..	A start-up ..
• **ponderous, slow and stupid**	• **a bunch of cowboys**
• **preoccupied with reviewing everything to death**	• **shooting from the hip**
• **awash in mindless procedures**	• **disorganised, slippery**
• **risk averse, procrastinating**	• **going off in all directions, unfocused**
• **characterised by paralysis through analysis**	• **characterised by sloppy work**
• **divided, fragmented**	• **exclusive, clannish, hostile**

Source: Doz and Hamel (1998) p. 154

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Complexity ..

Investment (corporate VC)

Other start-ups

Other established firms

Investors

Partnerships

Lawyers   Lawyers

Partnerships

Established firm

Why?

How?

Start-up

Services

Consultants

IP, investment

Grants, support

Grants

Public agencies

Universities

Grants

Research collaboration

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Summary

- Examples of case studies
  - For theory building
  - For theory building > application

Over to you …

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Aims of this session

- Show examples of case study research

- Highlight some considerations for your case study research

References

- Bryman, A., 1989, *Research Methods in Organization Studies*, Routledge.
- Yin, R. K., 1994, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Sage.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Lowe, A., 1991, *Management research: An introduction*, Sage.
- Eisenhardt, K. M., 1989, "Building theory from case study research" in *Academy of Management Review*, Volume 14, Number 4.

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