



VansonBourne

A brief guide to...

Maturity Models



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This guide looks to deliver an overview of how maturity models can provide real-world value to what you do. Drawing upon learnings gained from a raft of research activity and programmes conducted across the B2B tech space, over countless years. With all - unapologetically - framed in a commercial context.

This outline has no aspiration or intention to be an academic literature review of the maturity modelling topic. That is - to be frank - a far drier, more in-depth, conversation. One not suited to the tonality or coverage of this content. A broader discussion, nonetheless, we'd be very happy to have - albeit ideally over a coffee (and a slice of lemon drizzle).

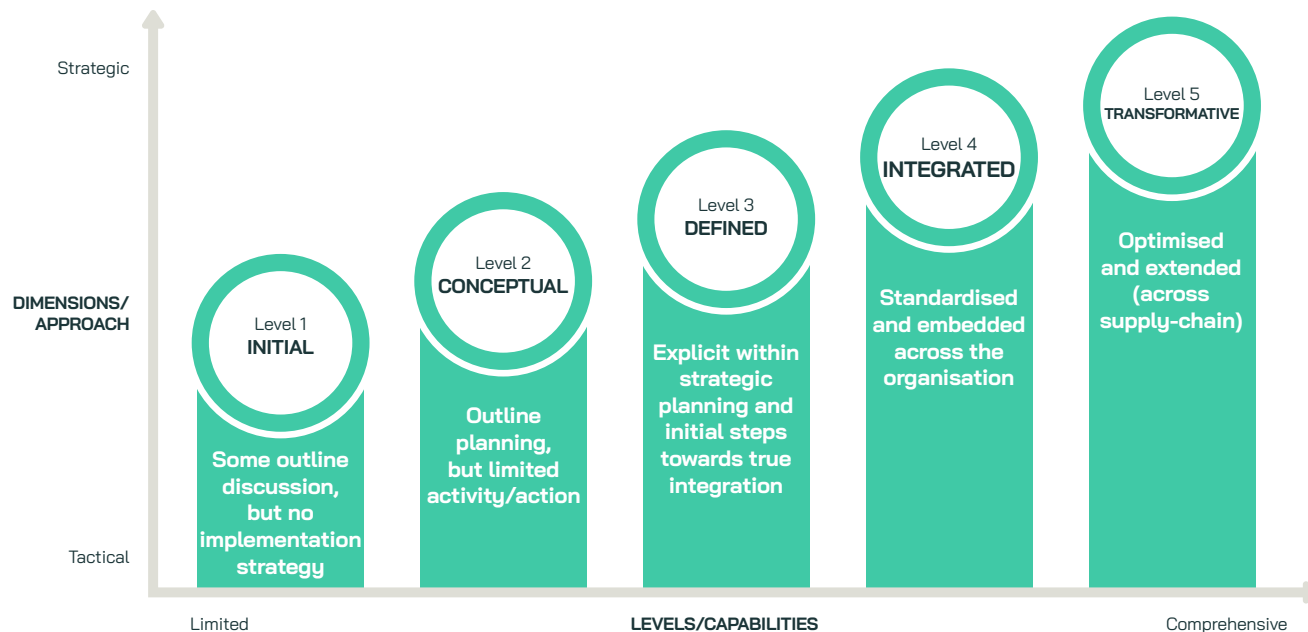
As with all of our 'A brief guide to...' series, this outline will act as an initial reference point for good practice. Helping you avoid the bear traps of such modelling techniques, whilst simultaneously delivering a source of inspiration and illumination - directly shaping your research activities, as well as maximising its impact.



So, what is a maturity model?

In its simplest form, a maturity model is a measurement of how an organisation is performing within a particular business area or discipline. With the associated modelling able to benchmark current performance, as well identify areas of improvement/prioritisation, in order to reach higher levels of maturity.

The true, directional, power of maturity modelling An illustrative framework



A maturity model enables a business to benchmark its strategies, practices and systems against a clear set of industry and/or competitive marketplace standards.

By having the ability to benchmark, organisations can employ maturity modelling to determine their current level of achievement or capability. Doing so over time to drive improvement.

Architecturally, maturity models typically have 'states' along an evolutionary scale. Providing the facility to define points of 'transition' from one to another - the associated attributes defining each state.

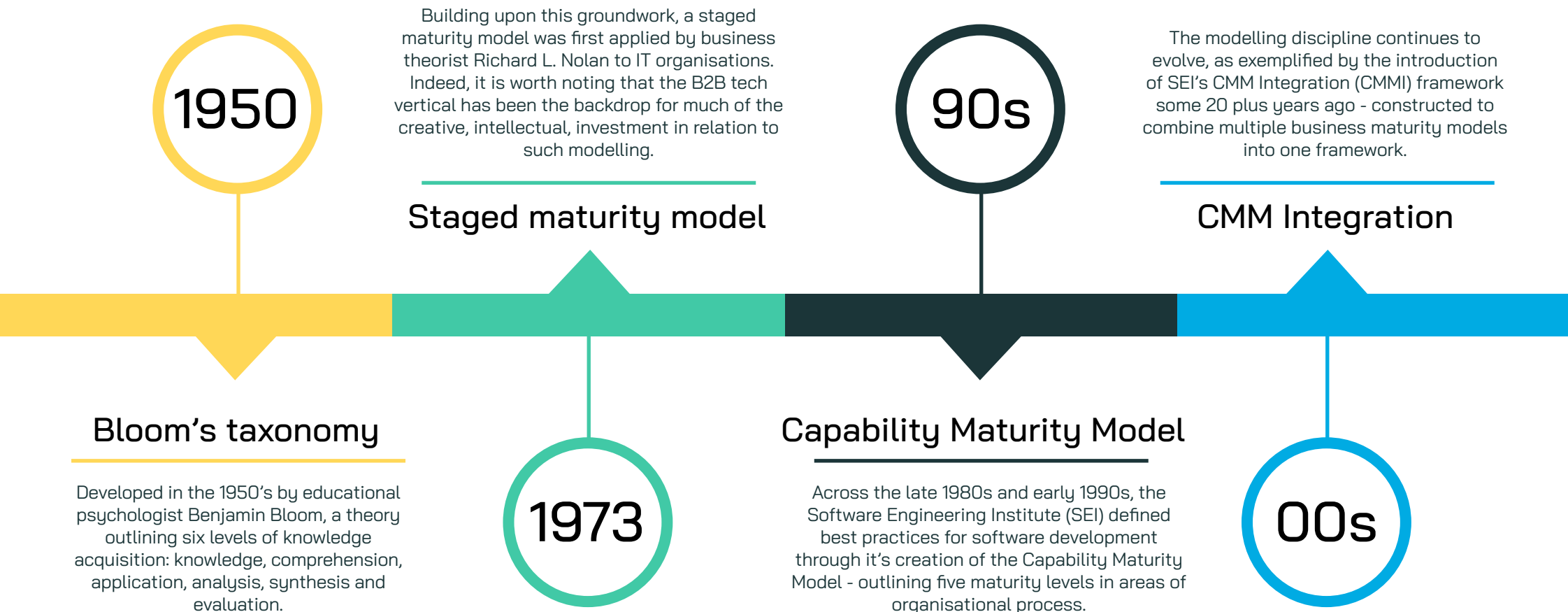
In essence, if a business encapsulates certain attributes, it is said to have achieved that level of 'maturity'. Such an approach provides the ability to define an organisation's current state of maturity, whilst determining future 'more mature' growth stages - as well as the areas of focus to achieving such evolutionary progression.





A brief history

Maturity modelling has a unique history, as is the case with any approach which aims to unpack the complexity of reality. Whilst originating in the software space, it was recognised that the core maturity modelling concepts could be applied to more general business practices. Many progression/hybrid models have been developed across sectoral verticals - drawing upon the core CMMI principles. Providing, solid, empirical data to support and inform business decision-making - to deliver a commercially competitive advantage.



Commercially advantageous benefits

Employing a maturity model as the foundation for improving processes, practices and performance provides businesses with the ability to:

» Benchmark performance



By applying a standard measurement approach, based on the model content, organisations can determine where they are in their improvement journey and set targets for future investments in performance improvement. Different teams within the same business can also employ the benchmark to compare performance.

» Catalyse performance improvement



By taking measurements against the model over a period of time, organisations can employ the framework as the basis for continuous performance improvement. Given the model is reflective of best practice or market standard, the framework can be employed as the basis for developing action plans to close performance gaps and improve maturity.

» Create and evolve a common language



Maturity models often create a consistent way of thinking and communicating about a specific business discipline or strategy. This is embodied in the framework language. Consistent language and communication is often supportive of domains of knowledge evolving into repeatable, consistent and predictable performance.

Of course, model-based process improvement is greatly enabled by a consistent and repeatable measurement instrument, facilitating benchmarking against the framework attributes. Such instruments can be part of a well-defined and standardised approach, often taking the form of a bespoke survey.



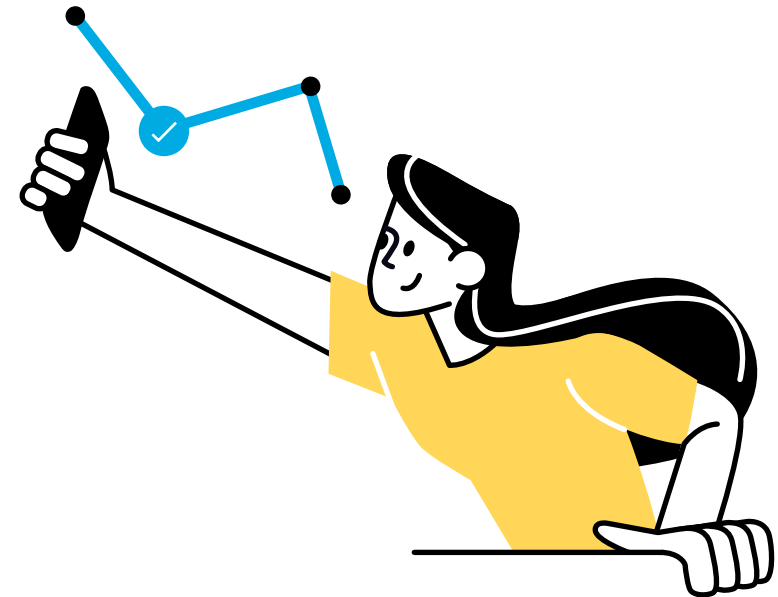
Supporting a thought leadership positioning

Whilst such maturity modelling can absolutely be applied to benchmark performance and drive process improvement within a business, there is an equally valid application to support external thought leadership, marketing and demand generation activities.

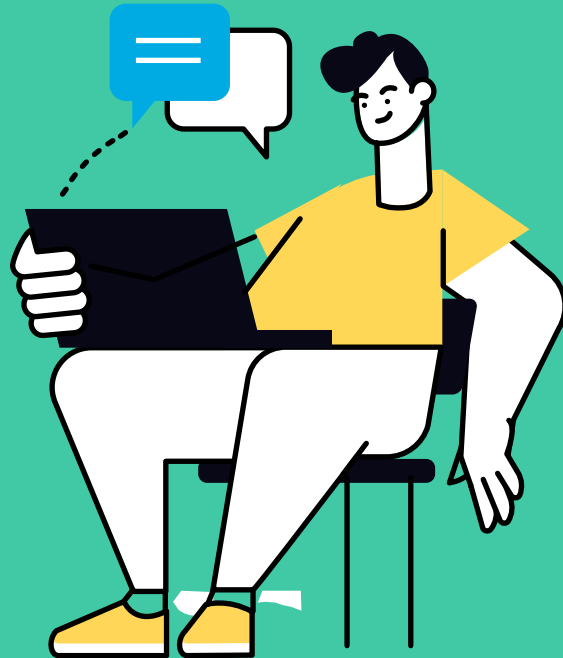
As we have previously outlined, employing a maturity model facilitates the classification of respondent organisations into specific 'groups'. Enabling us to establish how advanced (mature) they are within a particular business discipline - framed within the relative (category) performance context.

Such models work incredibly well as visual, impactful aids in supporting ideas and conclusions across thought leadership activities.

Deliverables provided as part of the related research programme (reports, webinars, etc.) could include analysis of the model outputs - highlighting how the different levels of maturity impact organisational performance. Due to the level of analysis required, in our experience, we would recommend that the research includes at least 600 respondents.



Model mechanics



The construction of any such maturity model would, of course, be bespoke in design - ultimately shaped by the precise focus of the study. That said, the principal architecture of the model would remain constant - drawing upon a battery of intelligently designed (self-serve) questions, with assigned weightings applied to the various answer options.

At Vanson Bourne, we'll work with you to custom-design a questionnaire that will offer the best basis from which to develop and score your maturity model. We won't go into too much detail in this guide, but here are three important things to consider:

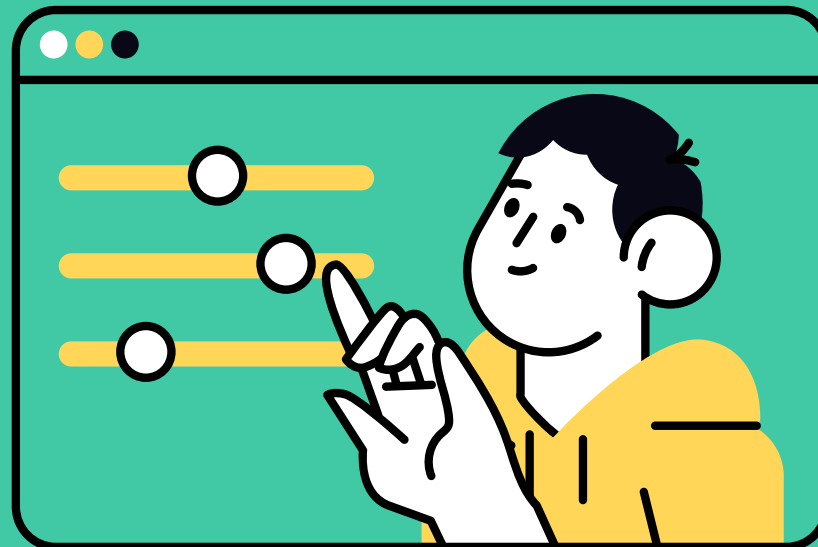
- 1 Although maturity models can be created retrospectively, the best approach is to **develop your survey questions with the maturity scoring in mind right from the start.**
- 2 Each model is unique, that being said, **we'd typically recommend 5-7 questions** as a good basis to assess and score respondents.
- 3 Question type plays a key role in how effective a question is in ascertaining maturity. **Scale and multi-response questions are often preferable** - enabling you to tailor (as well as 'weight') specific scores to particular respondent answers.

Benchmarking tool creation

Maturity model data can also be transformed into an interactive benchmarking tool. This is a fantastic way to gain attention and 'headspace' amongst customers and prospects alike. With relevant, personalised, content helping generate both engagement and leads.

Such a benchmarking tool can provide marketing and commercial teams with a powerful, interactive, diagnostic vehicle - to underpin the associated thought leadership, marketing and commercial activities. Ultimately, helping gain market cut-through.

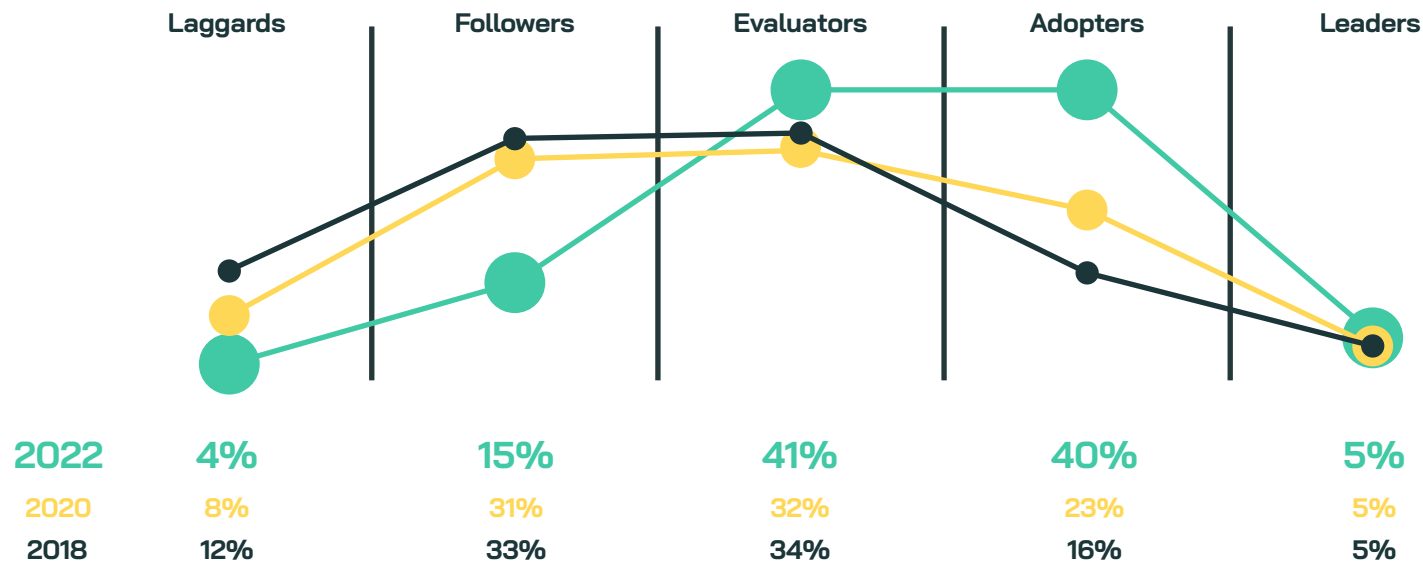
In our experience, any such activity requires a close client-agency partnership, to provide appropriate benchmarking guidance and direction (inclusive of weighting/gearing calculations). Enabling the end client to create a benchmarking tool within their website (or a campaign microsite).





Maturity modelling - an illustrative example

Delivering impact, relevance and distinctiveness



Within the microsite, customers/prospects would complete a mini-survey to establish where their organisation sits in relation to the market. The survey results would feature a call-to-action, summarising strengths and weaknesses, alongside a component explaining how the brand could provide necessary support - acting as a catalyst to organisational improvement. Such an interactive microsite, hosting such a benchmarking tool, really brings the maturity model 'to life' - facilitating customer/prospect engagement. With access to the full assessment output potentially 'gated' to facilitate lead generation activity.

Direction and guidance

Of course, we would be very happy to talk through our approach to maturity modelling with you - or for that matter - any aspects of the research process. Do view us as an expert sounding board, if guidance is required.

After all, Vanson Bourne has been supporting tech businesses in the delivery of market research and insight programmes for over 20 years.

Want to know more?
Don't hesitate to get in touch:

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