How to evaluate a company

Gerard Atkinson

Managing Director, Iris Ethics

Iris Ethics

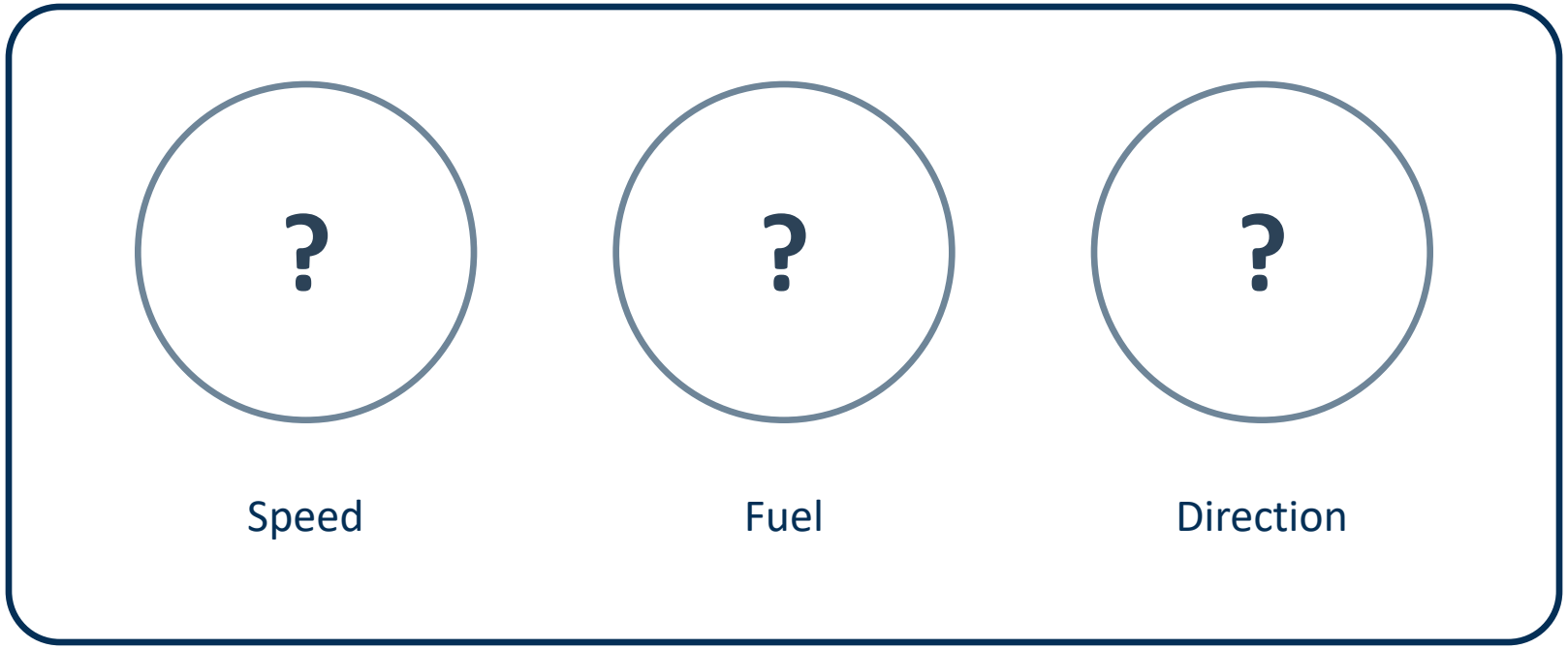
Show of hands

How many of you have evaluated a program in the past year?

Show of hands

How many of you have evaluated your **organisation** in the past year?

This is what you just told me you're driving.



No gauges. No baseline. Still moving.

Iris Ethics

What we'll cover

- The state of company-level evaluation
- Case Study: Iris Ethics
- Transferable lessons and discussion

AI Disclosure

- Anthropic Claude helped in:
  - Parsing my documents and notes into a draft evaluation framework
  - Visualising the program logic in PowerPoint form and saving me at least an hour of zhooshing
  - Sense testing data collection tools
  - Tweaking one image in this presentation (see if you can find it and let me know after)
  - Suggesting the show of hands idea
- All outputs were vetted and tested by the author before deployment

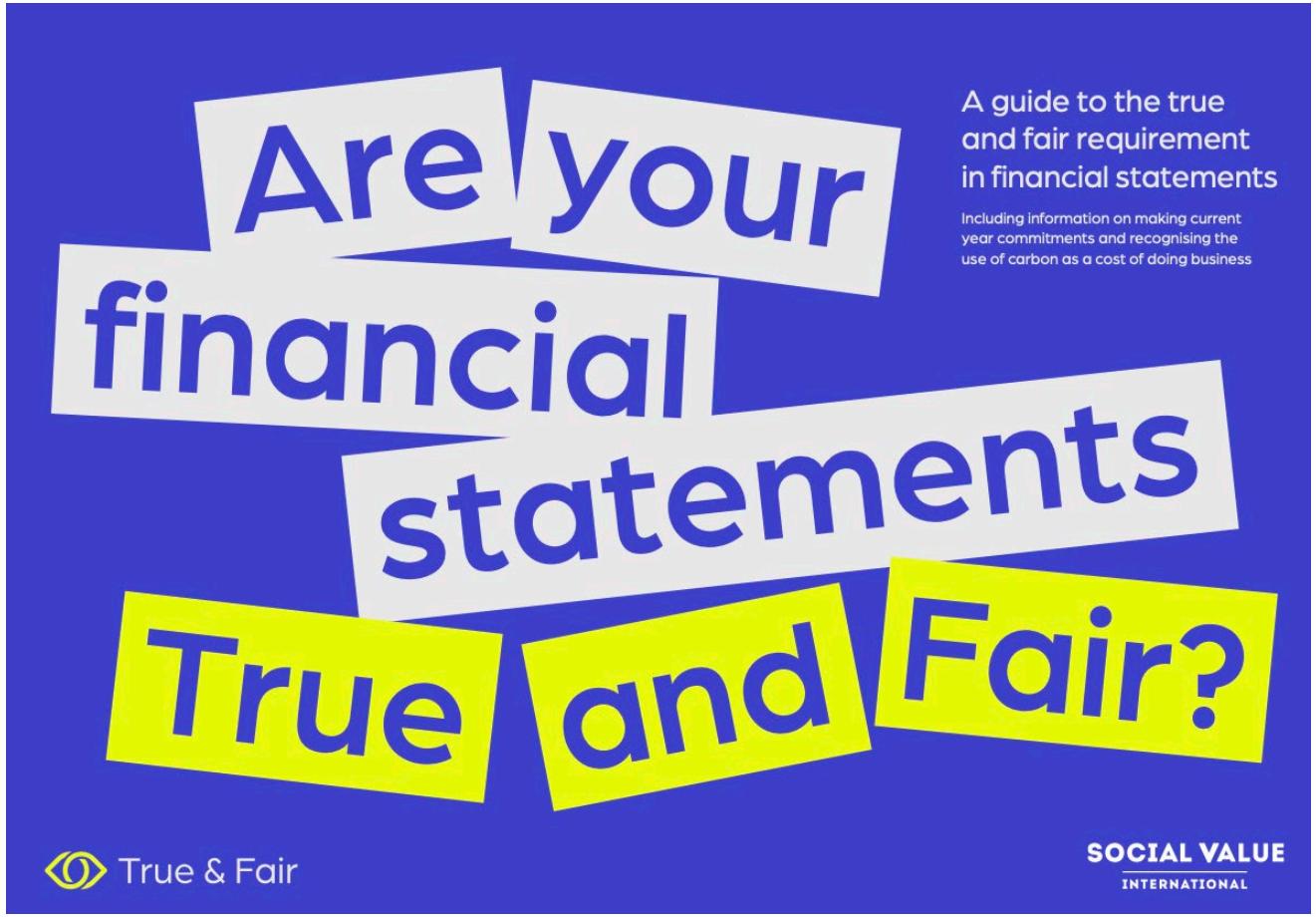
Iris Ethics

A brief overview

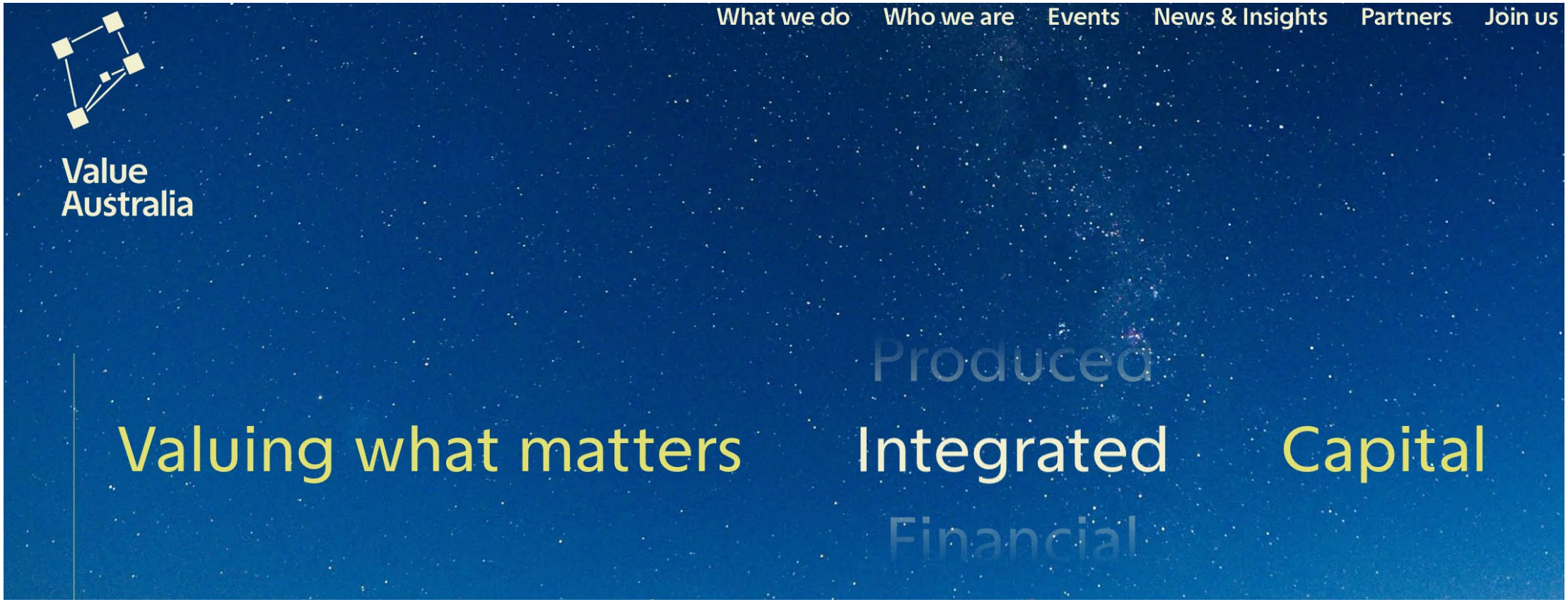
The state of company-level evaluation and social impact measurement

True and Fair

Iris Ethics



Value Australia



ESG (mainly E)

Iris Ethics

7. Geopolitical divergence

We have seen a growth in political divisions globally with the US pulling out of major international organisations (February 2026), revoking the EPA's Climate Endangerment Finding (February 2026), scrapping GHG emissions reporting requirements (September 2025) and redirecting offshore wind projects (March 2026). Meanwhile, European countries pledged 100 GW of offshore wind (January 2026), the EU and Australia concluded a Fair Trade Agreement (March 2026) and Australia announced a new 2035 climate target (September 2025).

This fragmentation increases the challenges faced by multinational businesses in navigating global sustainability regulations.

From Samantha Daly, Julia Green, Alexandra Haggerty, "ESG in focus: our FY2025/26 review", Johnson Winter Slattery, 9 July 2026, https://jws.com.au/what-we-think/esg-in-focus-our-fy2025-26-review/

I’m not the only evaluator noting it



Date and time: Tuesday 26 May 4.30pm -5.30pm ACST
Topic: Governance & Strategic Evaluation – Quo vadis?
Location: online via zoom, details will be shared just prior to the event
Presenter: Colin Sharp | Adelaide University
Register online by: 25 May 2026

Business literature



HBR.ORG

Michael G. Jacobides
(mjacobides@london.edu)
is an associate professor of strategic and international management at the London Business School, where he holds the Sir Donald Gordon Chair of Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Strategy Tools for a Shifting Landscape

The reality of running a company

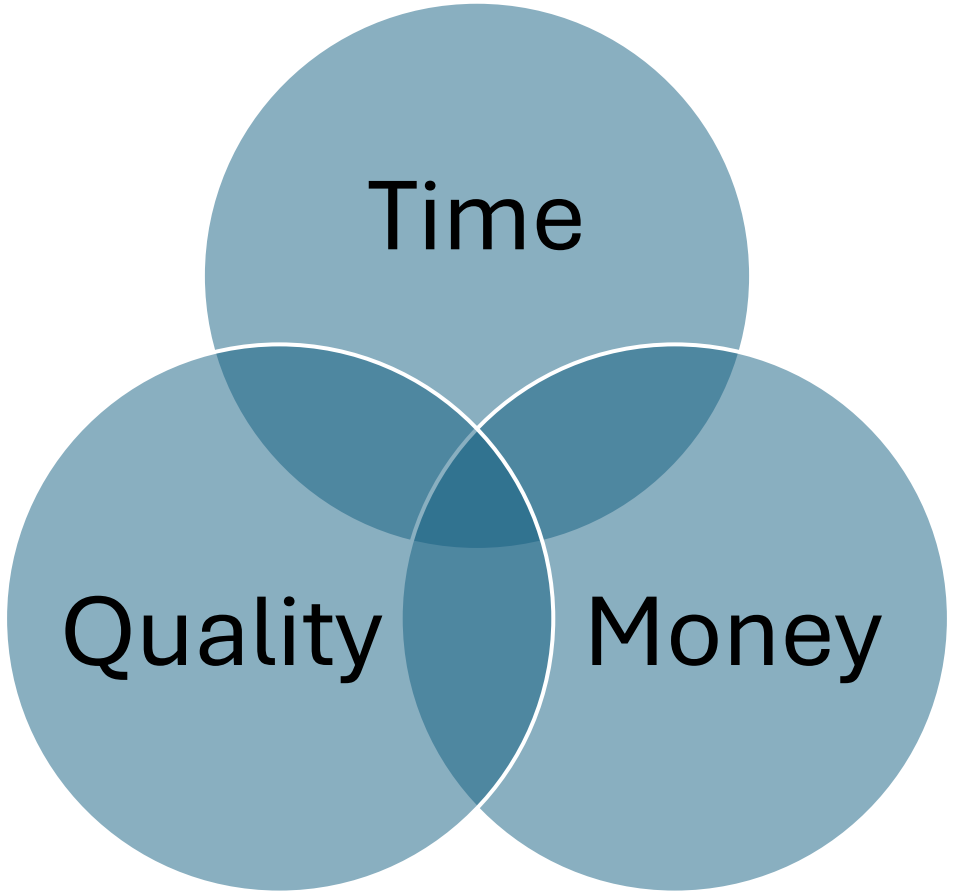
Iris Ethics

…building a business is like building a vehicle. It's like putting together a lot of different moving parts so that it takes you to your destination…

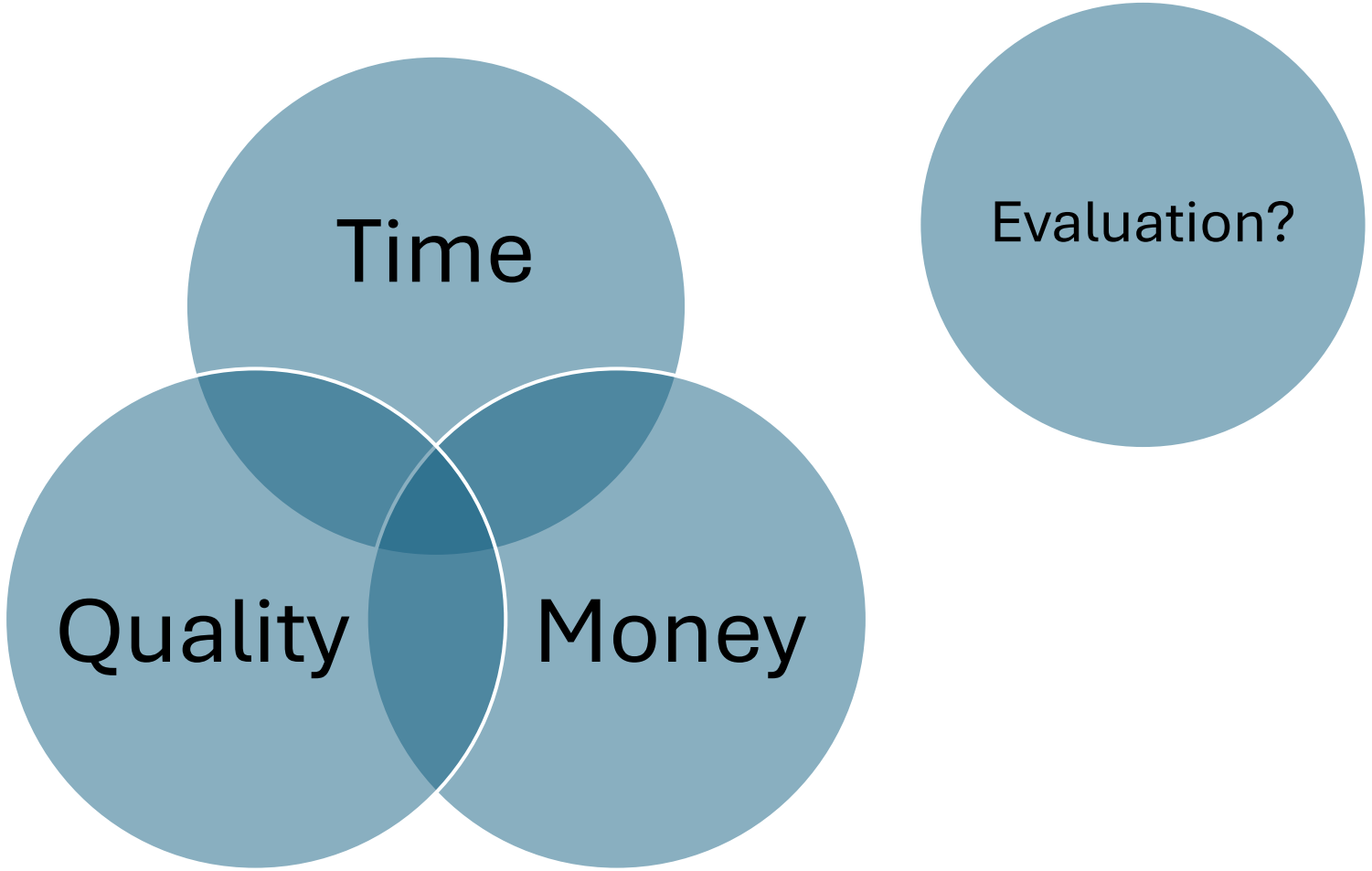
…actually it is more challenging than that. It would be so much easier if that machine were sitting motionless in some garage as we worked on it, but it isn't. It's travelling down the road with us at the wheel. So it's more like building the car as you drive it.

— Damion Viney, Co-

If running a company is about managing scarce and dynamic resources…



…how can evaluation find its place in the strategy discussion?



Iris Ethics

A Case Study

Evaluating Iris Ethics at a company level

If you don’t know us

Iris Ethics

We’re an open-access Human Research Ethics Committee

Founded in 2025 by evaluators and social researchers

Our vision: Empower ethical practice

We wanted to practice what we preach

Iris Ethics

What to evaluate?



We had to embed it from Day 1

Iris Ethics



A whole of company logic

Iris Ethics

- Not the first company to have done it
- But it's still rare outside of NGOs, government agencies, and evaluation consulting firms
- It's invaluable for strategy discussions:
  - The entire company on a page
  - Clear focus for board discussions

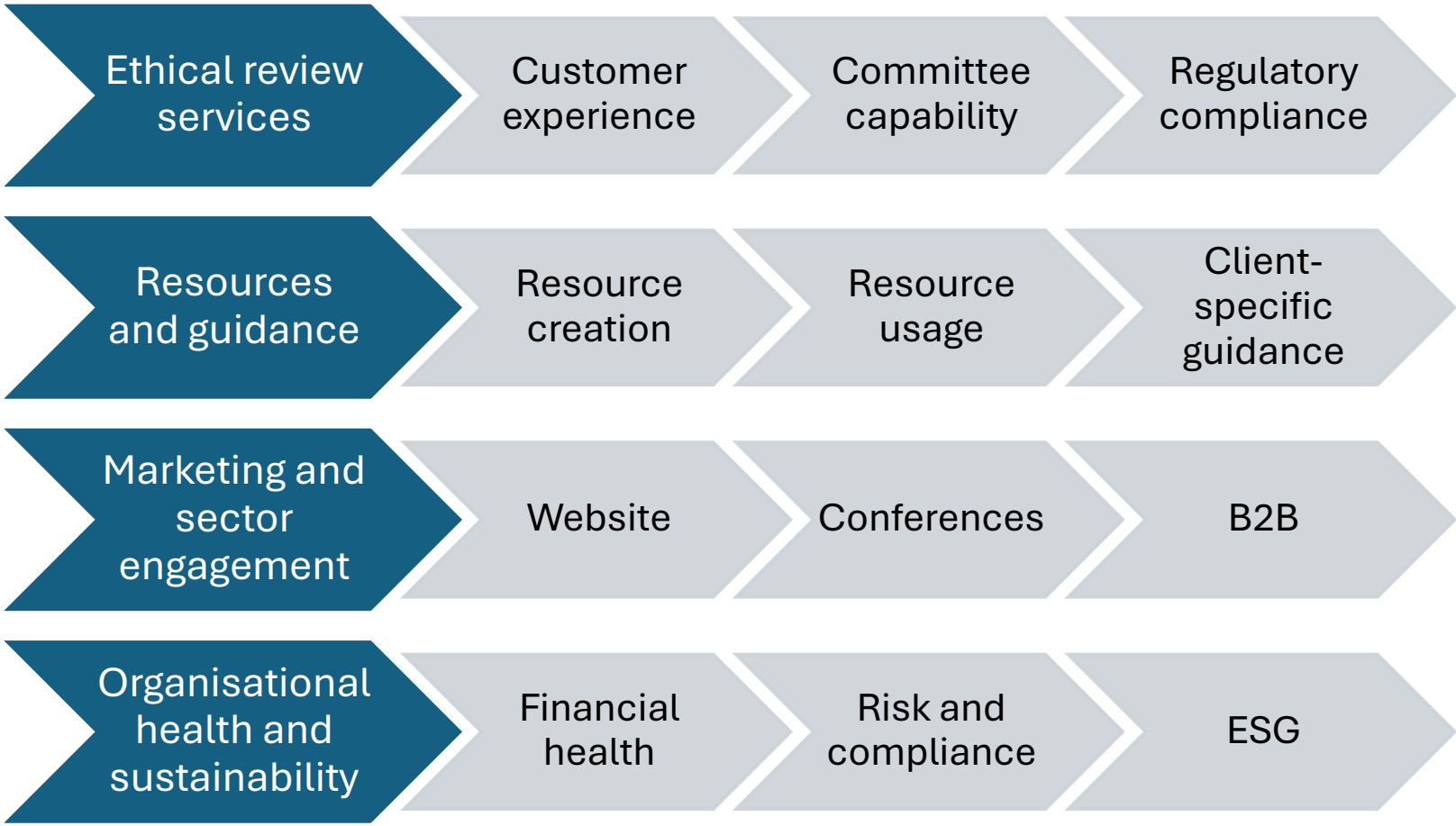
Iris Ethics — Program Logic

Financial Years 2025–26 to 2027–28



Identifying streams of evaluation

Iris Ethics



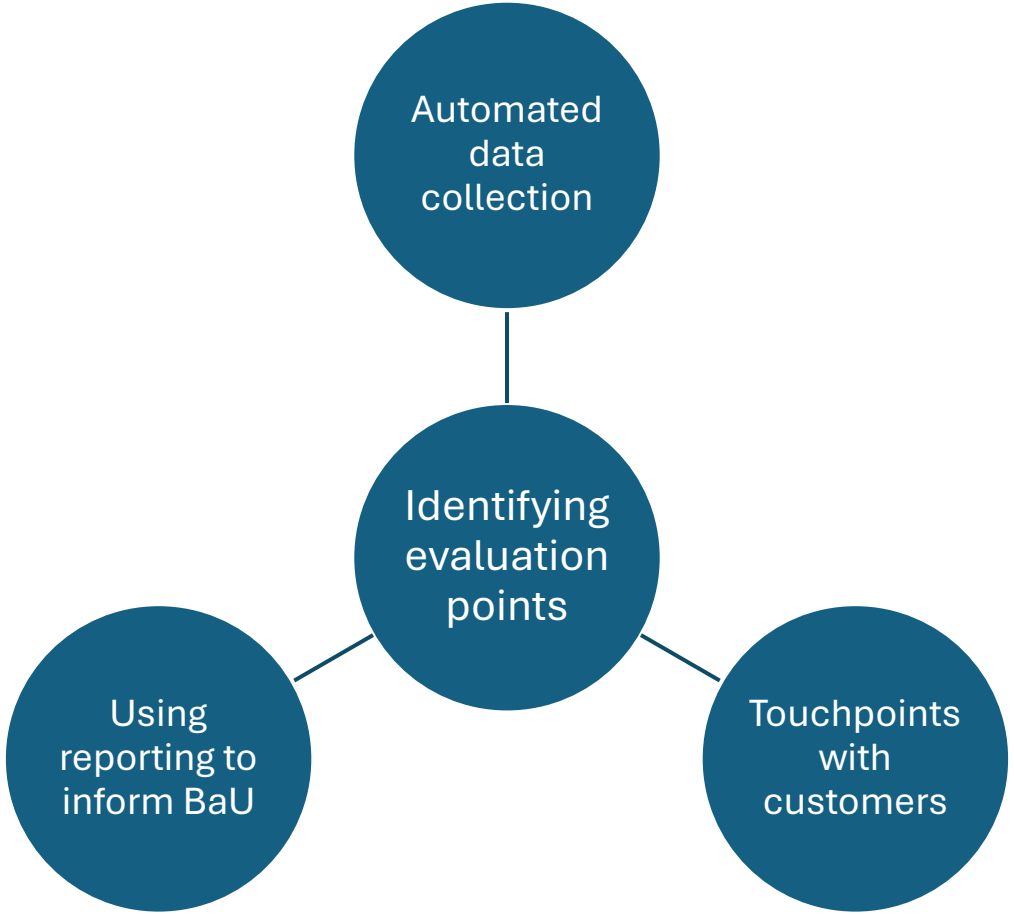
Evaluative thinking integrates traditionally siloed activities

Iris Ethics



Integrating with our systems

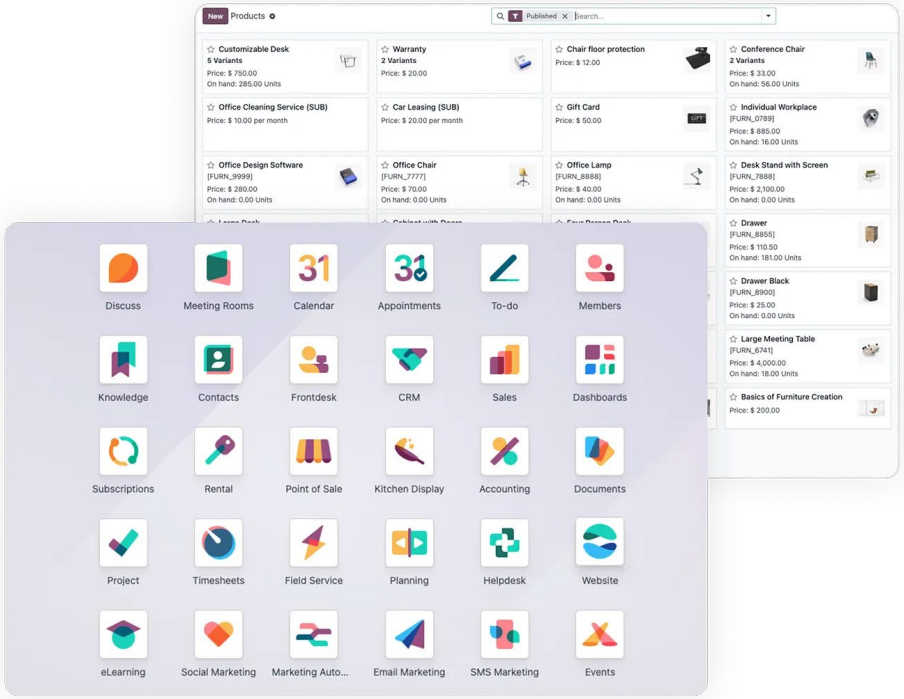
Iris Ethics



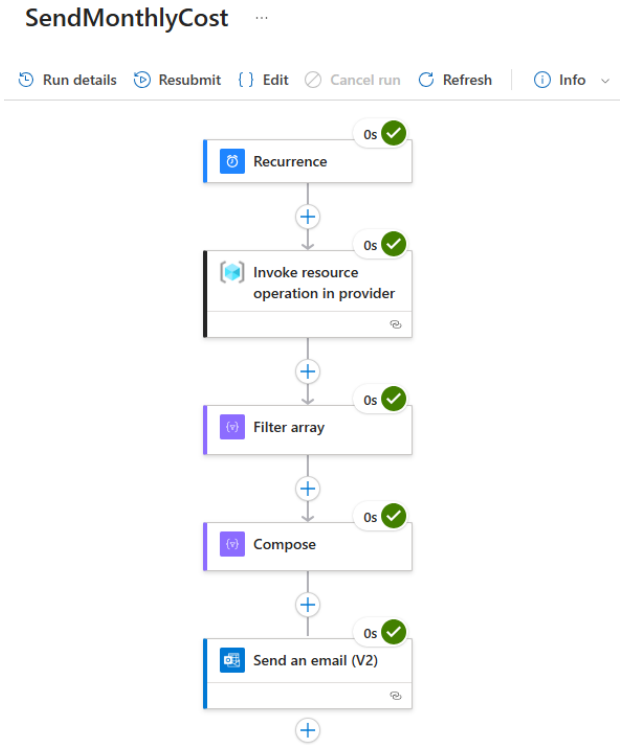
Integrating with our systems

Iris Ethics

Odoo (ERP+)



Microsoft Azure (Operations)



Lessons for practice

For company founders:	You have to plan for evaluation while the car is being built
	Evaluation is the mechanism to stay on top of strategy, especially in the startup phase
	Build your systems and processes with evaluation baked-in

Lessons for practice

For evaluators:	Articulate the link between evaluation and strategy
	A good program logic works wonders
	Working with the leadership and board to demonstrate the value added

Discussion

Iris Ethics

What do you see as barriers to integrated company evaluation?

How can the profession engage with this frontier of practice?

The car is still being built while in motion…

Iris Ethics

…but now it has a dashboard.



Hands up if you'll evaluate your organisation this year.

Thanks!

https://www.irisethics.com.au