PRODUCT, AT EVERY PLANNING HORIZON

Product is lineage.

Anderson & Co
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Nobody builds the product that matters in one go. They build its ancestors first, at the horizon they can afford, and let each one earn the next.

Drawn as an evolution chart across three planning horizons, with the most famous lineage in consumer technology as the worked example. Each product is born of the last. The ancestors do not disappear: they fund, teach and then feed the product above them. Sometimes they get eaten by it.

HORIZON THREE

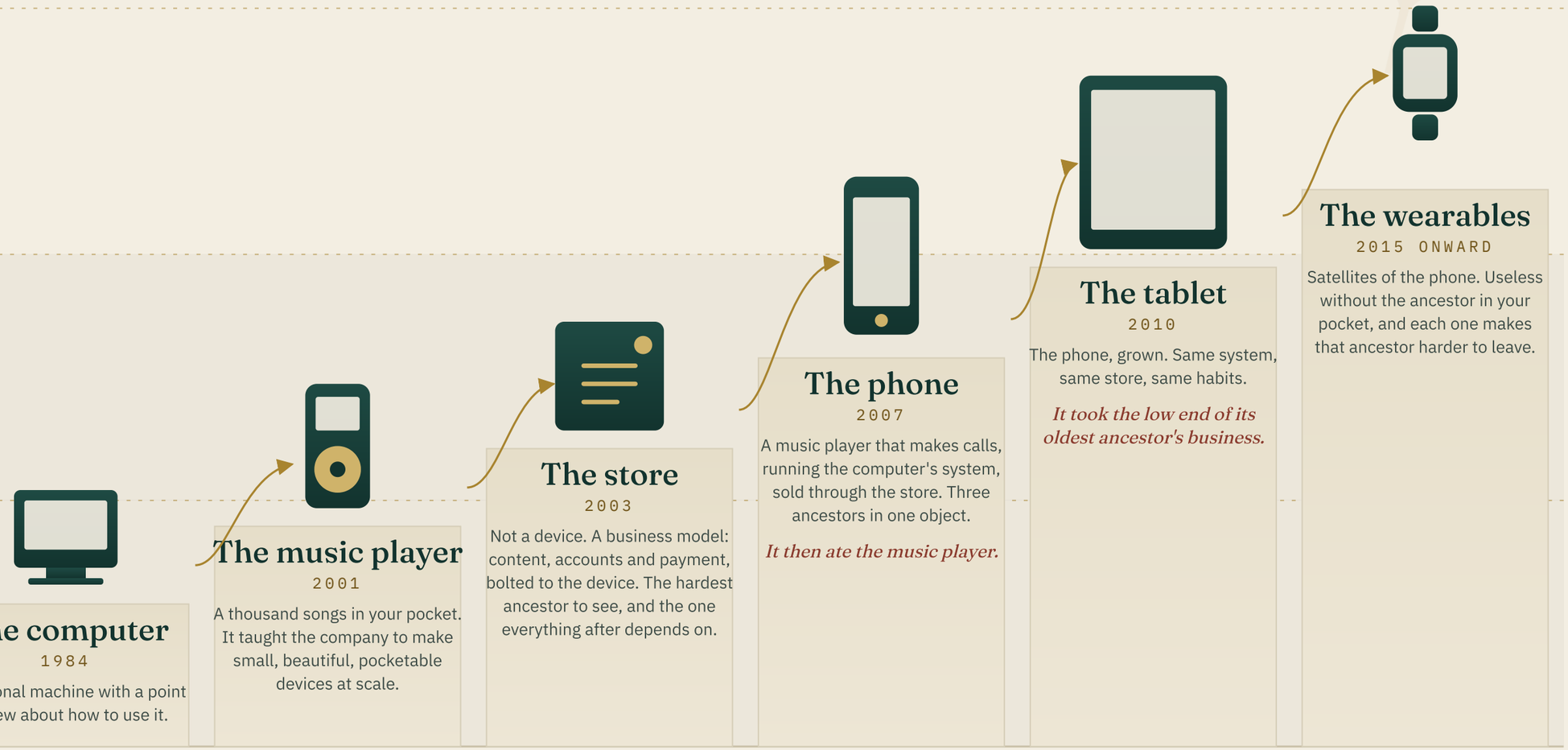
The business that replaces it

HORIZON TWO

The business you are building

HORIZON ONE

The business you run today



The computer

1984

A personal machine with a point of view about how to use it.

The music player

2001

A thousand songs in your pocket. It taught the company to make small, beautiful, pocketable devices at scale.

The store

2003

Not a device. A business model: content, accounts and payment, bolted to the device. The hardest ancestor to see, and the one everything after depends on.

The phone

2007

A music player that makes calls, running the computer's system, sold through the store. Three ancestors in one object.

It then ate the music player.

The tablet

2010

The phone, grown. Same system, same store, same habits.

It took the low end of its oldest ancestor's business.

The wearables

2015 ONWARD

Satellites of the phone. Useless without the ancestor in your pocket, and each one makes that ancestor harder to leave.

DRAW YOUR OWN · ONE

Put today's business on the floor

Horizon one is what pays the bills. Name the product, the customer and the money. Most companies stop here and call it a strategy.

TWO

Ask what it is an ancestor of

What does today's product teach you, fund, or give you permission to try? That is horizon two. Give it a team, a hypothesis and a kill criterion.

THREE

Be honest about which will eat which

Horizon three replaces something you sell today. If nobody in the room can name what it will cannibalise, you have a feature list, not a lineage.

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