Abstract: Performance landscape -- the mapping between firm choices and performance outcomes— is a construct central to organization theory. Yet prior formalizations span a wide range from unimodal production functions to rugged landscapes with many local peaks. I report on two complementary attempts to narrow this gap. First, introducing a theoretical landscape that captures possible interactions among continuous or discrete organizational choices and includes the well-known NK architecture as a special case, we show that: (a) The growth in the number of local peaks as a result of interdependencies may be much slower than previously hypothesized. (b) Complementarity significantly reduces the number of peaks. (c) Performance enhancing (innovative) mutations induce complementarities and lower the numbers of local peaks, often a single one. Second, building on case studies in mass market services we derive the mapping between managerial choice and firm performance excluding positioning considerations. In a strategy space defined by two dimensions—task richness and compensation—two local profitability peaks emerge: one with low compensation and low task richness and one with high compensation and high task richness. Exploring how firms discover, move to, and remain at the high compensation-high task richness peak we find three challenges to this strategy: (i) Context sensitivity: adoption, imitation and replication is harder for strategies that require significant customization to fit a new context; (ii) Schedule variability: just-in-time scheduling practices, in trying to match staffing to demand, drive quality employees away and compromise the strategy; and (iii) Temporal complexity: requirement for long-term investments leads to misleading performance feedback. These mechanisms can introduce major barriers to adoption and maintenance of promising strategies even if actual performance landscapes are only modestly rugged.