

Mastering Foresight: Scenario-Based Planning

Contact Information

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Course Description

Mastering Foresight: Scenario-Based Planning equips participants with practical methods and facilitation skills to anticipate change, explore multiple plausible futures, and translate insights into strategic action. Participants learn how to scan the environment for signals and trends, develop alternative future worlds, construct scenarios and vignettes, and lead a full scenario-based planning (SBP) workshop. The course emphasizes bridging foresight and strategy by translating scenario insights into prioritized capabilities, investment choices, and candidate strategic objectives.

This course is highly applied. Participants work in teams to build future worlds, write scenarios, analyze implications, identify capability gaps, and develop strategic recommendations.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain core foresight concepts and how they differ from forecasting
2. Conduct horizon/environmental scanning for trends and weak signals
3. Apply PESTLE to organize macro-level forces of change
4. Build Futures Wheels to explore first-, second-, and third-order effects
5. Identify critical drivers and define uncertainty poles
6. Develop alternative future worlds and scenario narratives
7. Design and facilitate a complete scenario-based planning workshop
8. Analyze scenario implications for opportunities, threats, and capabilities
9. Identify capability gaps and prioritize future investments
10. Translate foresight outputs into candidate strategic objectives (Change Agenda)

Course Outline

Day 1 – Foundations of Foresight & Environmental Scanning

- Course orientation and introductions
- What is foresight vs. forecasting
- Why organizations use scenarios
- Horizon scanning / environmental scanning
- Trends vs. weak signals
- PESTLE framework
- Futures Wheel method
- Group exercise: Build a Futures Wheel
- Scenario-Based Planning overview
- Drivers and critical uncertainties
- 2x2 scenario matrix
- Group exercise: Identify and define drivers and poles

Day 2 – Selecting Worlds & Developing Scenario Content

- Scenario-Based Planning overview
- Describing future environments
- World selection methods
- PESTLE content inside future worlds
- Writing scenario narratives
- Writing vignettes and artifacts
- Prompt engineering and modifiers
- Group exercise: Write scenario narrative

Day 3 – Designing & Running the SBP Workshop

- Session design
 - Assumptions (global / national / industry)
 - Opportunities
 - Challenges / threats
 - Future capabilities
 - Capability gaps
 - Prioritization and backcasting

Day 4 – Running the SBP Workshop, continued

- Capabilities not needed (divestiture)
- Recommendations
- Prioritized actions
- Develop briefing for stakeholders
- Final team world briefs and presentations

Day 5 – Analysis & Strategy Integration

- Cross-scenario capability analysis
- Common investment themes
- Recommendation synthesis
- Change Agenda concept
- Writing candidate strategic objectives
- Linking foresight to strategy management

Course Materials / Reading

Recommended reading provided:

- Dr. Lum's VFS Scenario Sampler
- Dr. Kostopoulos' Imagination Performance article
- Mad Scientist Three Futurist Urban Scenarios
- 2005 Evergreen Scenarios

Optional:

- Randall Rollinson and Early Young "*Strategy in the 21st Century*"
- Clark Murdock "*Future Making: Getting Your Organization Ready for What's Next*"
- Dr. Richard Lum "*4 Steps to the Future*"
- Bart Edes "*Learning from Tomorrow: Using Strategic Foresight to Prepare for the Next Big Disruption*"
- Army Futures Command Operational Environment 2035-2050