

# The Futurist Leader

*Yvette Montero Salvatico*

# About the Presenter

Yvette has over 15 years of corporate experience with large, multi-national firms such as Kimberly-Clark and The Walt Disney Company. She is now the Principal and Managing Partner at Kedge, a global foresight, innovation, creativity, and strategic design firm. Before joining Kedge, she led the effort to establish Future Workforce Insights at the Walt Disney Company, identifying future workforce trends and leveraging foresight models and techniques to assess potential threats and impacts, emerging ideas, and exciting opportunities for the organization. Yvette is also a founder and instructor at The Futures School, a 3-day, project-based foresight and futures thinking program.

Clients include The Walt Disney Company, Vanguard Financial, Little Pim, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, CIA, and Procter & Gamble




The  
**Futures**  
School



Our present-day  
tools, models, and  
processes are  
quickly becoming  
**Industrial Age**  
relics...

Something  
fundamental has  
changed!

A low-angle shot of a yellow rocket launch structure against a clear blue sky. The structure is a tall, narrow, yellow frame that tapers towards the top. In the center, a white cylindrical rocket is mounted, with a dark grey section near the base. The rocket has a dark grey dome-shaped nose cone. The launch structure has several horizontal bars or supports. In the bottom right corner, a portion of a white building with a grid-like facade is visible.

We have  
entered the ...  
**Postnormal**  
**Society**

A great **shift** in  
human and  
organizational  
development...what  
we once considered  
"normal" is not  
coming back.



Our  
Postnormal  
VUCA  
Landscape

# VUCA

## Volatile

We now live in an era of **Accelerating Change**, a landscape in which social, cultural, and technological progress is **exponentially increasing** in ever shorter intervals.

Ken Olson, president and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, speaking at a 1977 meeting of the World Future Society in Boston:

“There is **no reason** for any individual to have a computer in his home.”



**VUCA**

**Uncertainty**

**Educated Incapacity** (or the **Illusion of Certainty**) is **knowing so much** about what you know that you are the **last to know** that things are changing...



# VUCA

Today's  
**complex  
environment**  
is driven by  
**more than  
technology.**





**Uncertainty** is when you've **defined the variable** but don't know its value.

**VUCA**  
Ambiguous

But **ambiguity** is when you're **not even sure** what the **variables** are.



Volatility



Uncertainty



Complexity



Ambiguity



# We Need a New Breed of Thinker in Our Organizations...

Those who look ahead can create a new map for innovations, possibilities & opportunities.



Future planning in our **current volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment** requires us to leverage both **quantitative and qualitative** approaches.

**Research** + **Creativity** + **Data** + **Intuition** = **Strategic Foresight**

Foresight allows us to mine the **external environment** for trends and leverage those insights to create maps of the **emerging landscape**.

We Cannot  
**Predict**  
The Future  
But...





We Can  
Map  
The Future...

INSVLAE MOLVCCAE celeberrimae sunt ob Maximam aromatum copiam quam totum terrarum orbem mittunt: harum praecipue sunt Ternate, Tidoris, Motir, Machion et Bachtion, his quidam adungunt Gilolum, Celebiam, Borneonem, Ambonum et Bandam. Ex Insula Timore in Europam advehuntur Santala rubra & alba, Ex Banda Noces myristicae, cum Flore, vulgo dicto Macis Et ex Moluccis Caryophylli: quorum icones in pede hujus tabellae ad vivum expressas poni curavit

Si quis scire velit quid sit...  
Moluccae Insulae sunt quibus...  
Moluccae Insulae sunt quibus...  
Moluccae Insulae sunt quibus...

Imprinted at London by  
John Wolfe  
Grauen by Robert Becket

Noua Guinea a nautis sic dicta quod eius litura, laetrumque facies Guinea Africae multum sint similes, ab Andrea Corpeo discoverata videtur inter Terras de Pictonia: quae Pictonia nuncupata est a Pictoni, qui eam in Anno 1571



The future is not an empty space but like the past it is an **active aspect** of the present.



ARE YOU **OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE?**

How we **think** about the future directly impacts the decisions we make **today**.





# A Futures Thinking Analysis

1. If you could pose 3 questions to a clairvoyant, what would you ask?
2. In the best possible world, what would you hope for?
3. In the worst possible world, what are your greatest fears?
4. What pivotal events from the past few years have provided you the best lessons for the future?
5. What major decisions with long-term implications do you face at the moment?
6. What major constraints are you experiencing inside & outside of your organization/system/life?
7. If all constraints were removed, and you could direct what is done, what would you do?

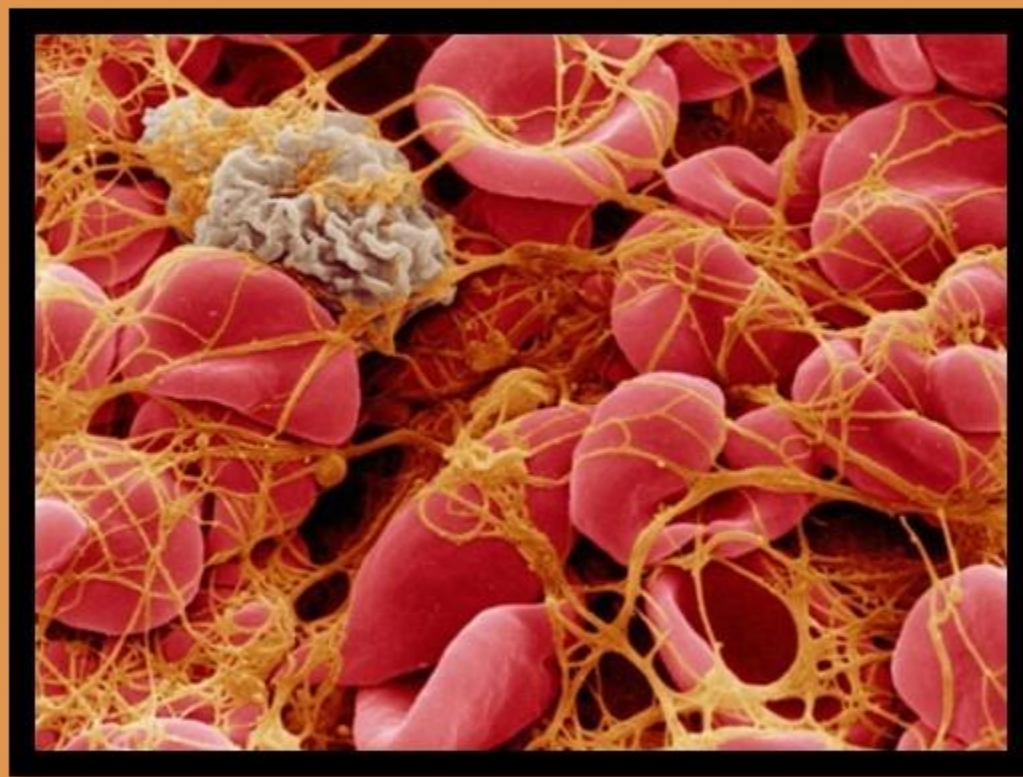
What if...instead of planning for the  
Workforce of the Future, we **CREATED** it?

Dealing only with today's problems leaves us weakened.  
**Strategic Foresight** acts as an **Immune System...**

Identify potential  
threats and emerging  
opportunities

See new  
perspectives

Provide context  
for present-day  
decisions



Illuminate  
unexpected  
implications

Test possible  
outcomes

Ensure we are not  
vulnerable & unaware  
of challenges

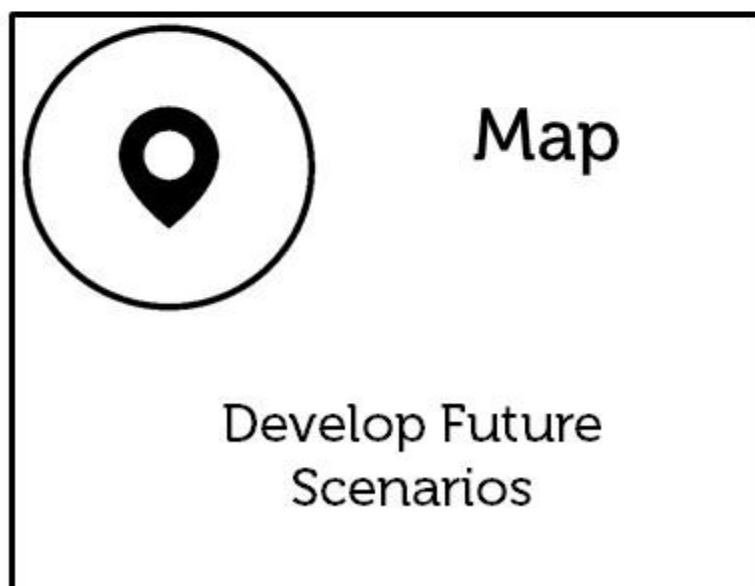
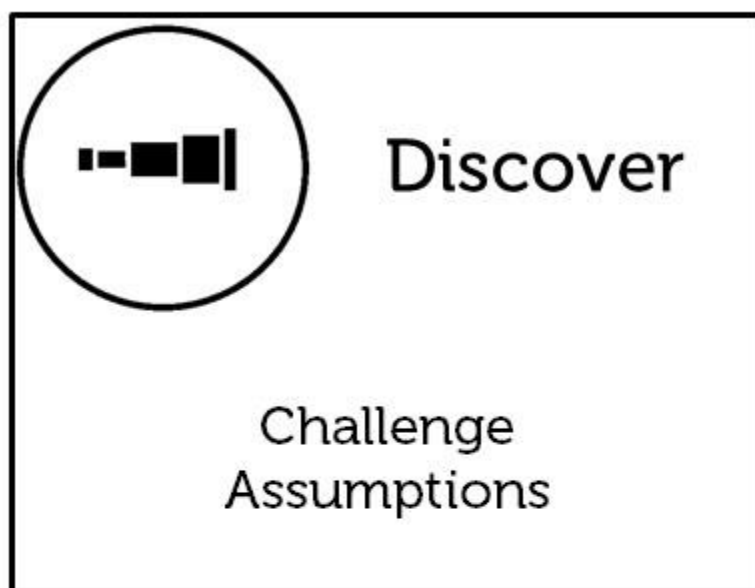
**Strengthening** our **collective capacity** to deal  
with what actually happens.

Strategic Foresight is a discipline, but is actually best served as an **integrated philosophy**.

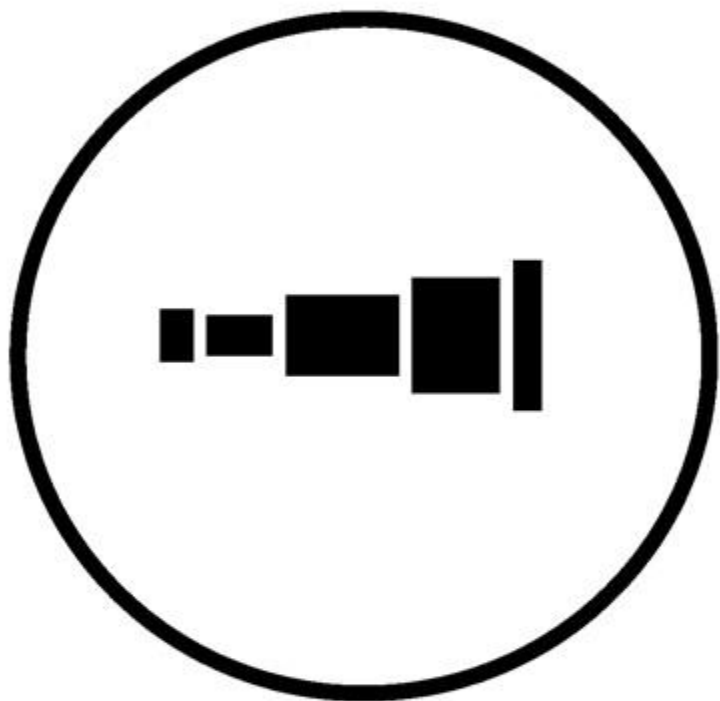


It should run in the background like the **operating system of the organization** – driving **leadership development, innovation and organizational transformation**.

**Natural Foresight** exposes leaders and organizations to an **action-based** approach to building a **futures thinking competency**, utilizing foresight **tools** such as environmental scanning, assumption and bias modeling and scenario development.



# Discover



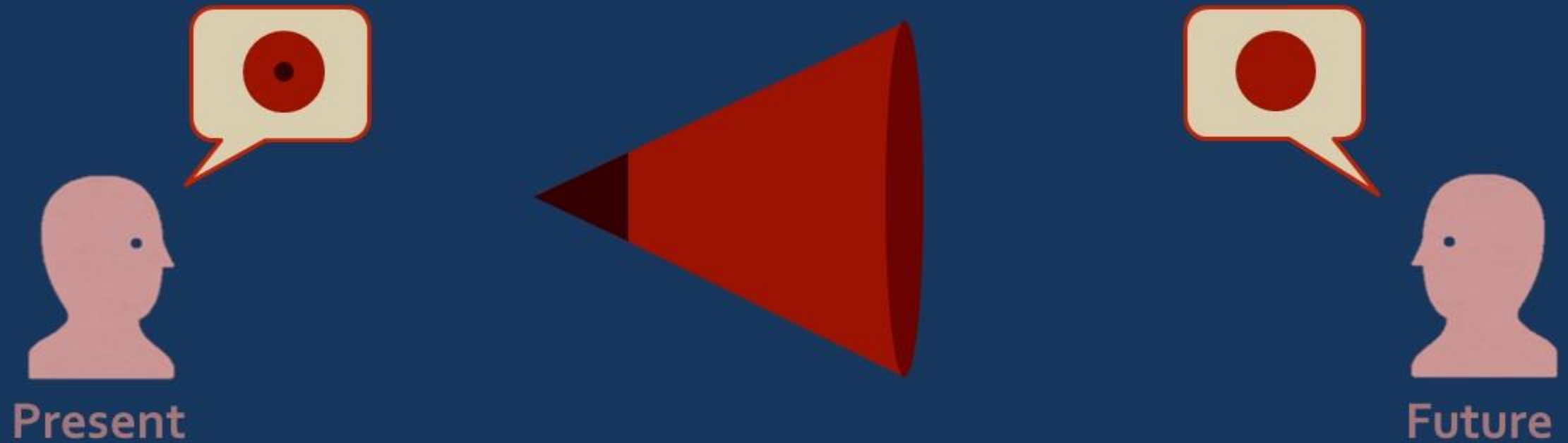
Challenge  
Assumptions

Today's environment of accelerating volatility and exponential change is **disrupting paradigms** in every domain. However, our deeply engrained **biases and assumptions** prevent us from recognizing these disruptions and taking action to capitalize on them.

Strategic Foresight transports us **past our present-day models and ideas**, acting as the most effective way to recognize disruptors on the horizon of business and society.

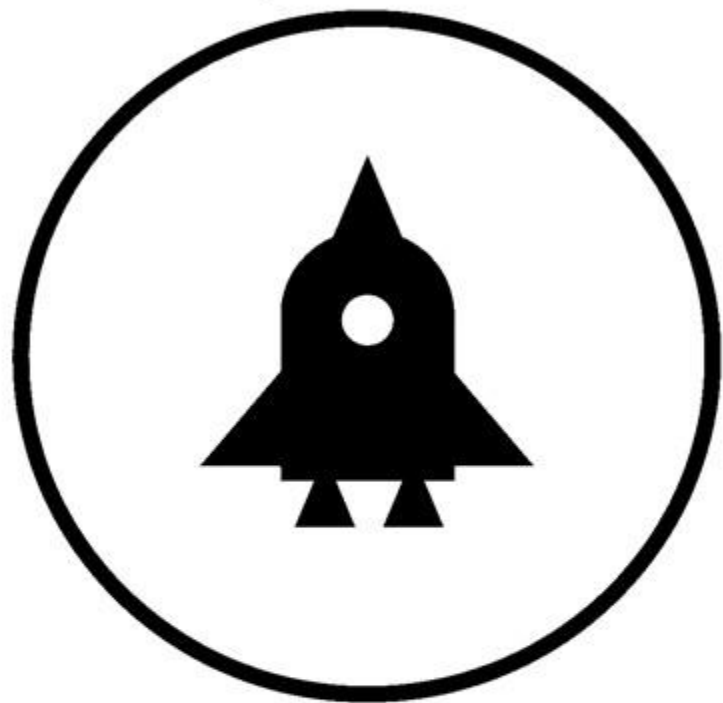


When we approach innovation from the **landscape of today**, we tend to automatically and subconsciously filter any new information through the **lens of our present perspectives and constraints**.



Approaching innovation from the **lens of alternative futures** frees us to think far beyond our present obstacles, granting us the **perspective of unseen opportunities** that we can gain rather than known commodities that we can lose.

# Explore



Scan to  
Uncover Hidden  
Opportunities

**External scanning and trend analysis** in the macro (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, and Political) environment is a necessity – future disruptors, competitors and opportunities will most likely originate from **outside your industry.**

Strategic Foresight works from the **outside-in**, providing the tools to slay the data tsunami and identify the **weak signals** on the horizon.

To plan effectively, we must recognize that **trends do not exist in isolation**; instead they collide, mesh and interact with one another.



To understand what is **emerging**, Strategic Foresight helps us make sense of the **patterns that are forming** as a result of these creative collisions.

# Map

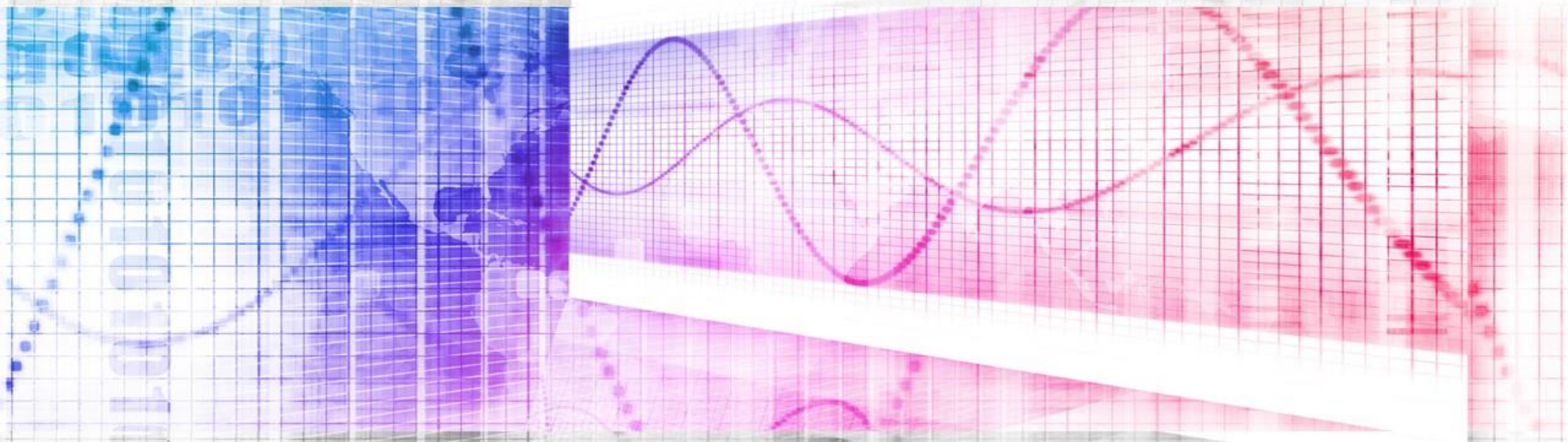


## Develop Future Scenarios

**Scenarios** are an incredibly powerful tool due to their ability to **immerse** organizations into **future probabilities, alternative possibilities, and aspirational outcomes.**

These **well-informed maps** allow firms to assess the validity, robustness and **future-readiness** of their current strategies, while also **uncovering new** ideas, products, and models that they would have otherwise missed.

It is **no longer enough** to extrapolate historical data forward to reinforce an official, linear future.



Effective long-term planning efforts must consider **multiple operating environments** in order to ensure strategy is **resilient, adaptive and transformative**.

# Create



Design and  
Execute Action  
Plans

It's **not enough** to build strategy, innovate, map out organizational development or "look into the future" without successfully acting upon all of that hard work.

Organizations must build both short and long-range **action plans and deliverables** to help implement innovation and **preferred future outcomes.**

Most organizations focus solely on the **Push of the Future**, forced into a perpetual state of reacting to **trends and emerging issues**. Conversely, the **Pull of the Future** provides the framework to intentionally act upon our **preferred futures**.

**Push  
of the  
Future**



**Pull  
of the  
Future**

Strategic Foresight allows us to **leverage both ends of the futures spectrum** in order to **discover the future and create it – today**.

## Context and Background

Discover personal and organizational assumptions around the focal issue.

### Sample Tools:

- Unconscious Bias Modeling
- Ladder of Inference
- Causal Layered Analysis



### Sample Tools:

- Scenario Development
- Cross Impact Matrix
- Narrative Transformation
- Futures Wheels
- Design Fiction



Create sets of divergent, provocative maps using creativity, data, intuition, and research.

World Building

## Futures Intelligence

Explore and interpret the emerging trends, patterns and clusters.

### Sample Tools:

- Environmental Scanning
- Qualitative Predictive Analysis
- Probability/ Impact Matrix
- Pattern and Sensemaking



### Sample Tools:

- Backcasting
- Artifacts of the Future
- Sign Posts
- Scenario Commonalities
- Scenario/Strategy Matrix



Inform long-range planning efforts, inspire innovation and begin creating the future today!

Strategy Recommendations<sup>32</sup>



**td**  
at work

TIPS, TOOLS & INTELLIGENCE  
FOR DEVELOPING TALENT



## THE FUTURIST LEADER

Yvette Mor...

### A SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

There are many proven ways to develop scenarios, but regardless of the method you choose, here are several key criteria that always apply.

My scenario:

- is part of a set of divergent, plausible, and provocative future worlds
- showcases the far-reaching implications of a multitude of today's trends
- includes trends from every STEEP category
- has a beginning, a middle, and an end
- is an immersive narrative that transports the reader into a new environment
- encapsulates the values that undergird the trends.

## CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING A FORESIGHT COMPETENCY

### Situation

Facing aggressive growth targets coupled with a need to significantly increase its workforce, an international division of a media and entertainment organization decided to launch an effort to prepare for the workforce of the future.

Three vision statements were created for the Workforce of the Future initiative:

- Ensure we have a technologically fluent and adaptive employee population that is comfortable, knowledgeable, and savvy enough (regardless of tenure) to support and grow our evolving business models.
- Deliver a globally and locally integrated strategic workforce plan (including changes to organizational design) to ensure we have the appropriate people, positions, and skillsets as we move into a digital evolution of the business.
- Infuse new, fresh thinking through the creation of a global innovation intern program and network.

### Solution

The organization was introduced to strategic foresight and quickly realized that it should be creating the Workforce of the Future rather than just planning for it. The Workforce of the Future vision was expanded and the company launched an effort to redefine the human resources function for the 21st century by developing and cultivating a futures thinking competency across the organization:

- Ensure we have an adaptive, resilient, and transformative human capital ecosystem (talent, processes, and infrastructure) to successfully position the organization for continued growth in an uncertain world.

- Develop a customizable foresight toolkit that will ensure a common language and result in integrated, future-fit workforce strategies that can quickly adapt to changing market conditions.
- Infuse and sustain a new way of thinking through the creation of a global team of future thinkers, championing ongoing environmental scanning efforts and change management strategies, and providing a critical element in the innovation framework.

### Results

The following tangible outcomes have resulted from the Workforce of the Future:

- More than 200 leaders around the globe were trained in the Natural Foresight approach and immediately began applying the standard toolkit.
- Traditional strategic planning processes have been revamped to include futures intelligence as scenario planning, and the organization has put specific business strategies as a direct result of foresight efforts.
- To support change management efforts, ad hoc practitioners were selected to receive additional training and became foresight trainees.
- Broader company leadership has declared strategic foresight one of enterprise-wide leadership competencies.

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

### Report

Young, M.B. 2014. "Scenario Planning for Human Resources and Strategic Workforce Planning" In *Scenario Planning for Human Resources and Strategic Workforce Planning*, edited by The Conference Board. [www.conferenceboard.org/publications/publicationdetail.cfm?publicationid=2760](http://www.conferenceboard.org/publications/publicationdetail.cfm?publicationid=2760).

### Articles

Casey, G.W., Jr. 2014. "Leading in a 'VUCA' World" *Fortune* magazine, March 20. <http://fortune.com/2014/03/20/leading-in-a-vuca-world>.

Forum. 2010. "Speed in a VUCA World: How Leaders of the Future Will Execute Strategy." *Forum*, June. [www.forum.com/downloads/transcripts/VUCA](http://www.forum.com/downloads/transcripts/VUCA)

—. 2015. "Wicked Opportunities: 7 Shifts in the Age of Opportunity." *Rotman Management*, Winter 2015 edition.

Spencer, F., and Y. Montero Sabatino. 2013. "W Predicting Trends Doesn't Help Prepare for Future." *Fant Company*, November 20. [www.fastcoexist.com/302148/futurist-forum/-predicting-trends-doesnt-help-prepare-for-the-future](http://www.fastcoexist.com/302148/futurist-forum/-predicting-trends-doesnt-help-prepare-for-the-future).

Wang, T. 2013. "Big Data Needs Thick Data." *Ethnography Matters*, May 13. <http://ethnographymatters.net/blog/2013/05/big-data-needs-thick-data>.

Wilkinson, A., and R. Kopers. 2013. "Living in 'Futures'" *Harvard Business Review*, May 1st. <https://hbr.org/2013/05/living-in-the-f>

## + JOB AID

### A FUTURES THINKING EXERCISE

Before beginning your foresight journey, it is helpful to first uncover how you personally think about the future. Complete this exercise from an individual or a professional perspective; if your foresight efforts are team-based, use this questionnaire to initiate a discussion about the future.

- If you could pose three questions to a clairvoyant, what would you ask?
- In the best possible world, what would you hope for?
- In the worst possible world, what are your greatest fears?
- What pivotal events from the past few years have provided you with the best lessons for the future?
- What makes...

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD FUTURIST?

In our VUCA environment, everyone in your organization must be a futurist, continually challenging biases and scanning the environment for hidden opportunities. Here is a list of attributes a good futurist should embody.

A good futurist should:

- Crave curiosity.** As a futurist, it is more important to ask "why?" than "what?" so that we can dive into the root cause of an issue and understand the value shifts driving today's trends. It is not uncommon for good futurists to explore so far into a trend that they forget where their journey began. In other words, if you feel like you have been down the rabbit hole while examining trends, you are probably doing it right!
- Act courageously.** Thinking and acting on our futures intelligence takes courage. As humans we are wired to reject change, and the future is synonymous with change. A good futurist must recognize that the insights we share will make others feel uncomfortable, but it is in that discomfort that growth occurs.
- Welcome diversity.** Foresight is a team sport. We all have biases and assumptions driven by our worldviews and mental maps. Exploring the future alongside a diverse set of peers ensures that we challenge our information filters.
- Think outrageously.** The ability to think provocatively is paramount to being a good futurist. In order to expand our thinking (and that of our leadership and stakeholders), we must stretch our minds beyond our comfort zone.
- Connect the dots.** It is not enough to collect the dots (or trends). A good futurist must also connect them to uncover patterns. Nothing in our current landscape exists in isolation and trends are no exception. To understand what's next, we must analyze the intersection of trends and make sense of the patterns they form.
- Think in multiples.** A core principle of strategic foresight is that there is not one but unlimited futures before us. As good futurists, we must be able to think in simultaneous, multiple futures rather than the traditional, single, linear forecast. Being able to consider paths beyond the official future allows us to create robust and resilient strategies that will be successful no matter which future emerges.

# How to begin creating the future today...

While it's impossible to distill a discipline that's been in use for over 40 years in a webinar, there are ways you can begin to create your future today using foresight.

- 1. Challenge Assumptions and Old Ways of Thinking** – If you think an idea is ridiculous, ask yourself “why?!”
- 2. Start From the Outside In** – Join Twitter. Instead of having to hunt down different publications and articles, simply follow thought leaders, champions and rebels (from OUTSIDE your industry), and let the insights come to you.
- 3. Think in Simultaneous Multiples** – Forget about the linear Five Year Plan! Sketch out three or more divergent stories about possible futures for your focal issue over the next 10 years.
- 4. Pull Yourself to the Future** – While it's important to remain aware of the trends that will “push” us into the future, we often forget about the other end of the spectrum, the “pull” of the future which allows us to visualize our aspirations and create a map to them, regardless of what threats may emerge.



Kedge is a minority-owned, global foresight, innovation and strategic design firm.

[www.KedgeFutures.com](http://www.KedgeFutures.com)

We help our clients:

- Uncover emerging trends and issues that will impact their business.
- Discover unseen opportunities for strategic development and advantage.
- Thrive in a world of complex ideas and practices.

[info@KedgeFutures.com](mailto:info@KedgeFutures.com)



The  
**Futures**  
School

Next Session:  
Oct 13-15, 2015

TFS is a one-of-a-kind, interactive and project-based training program.

[www.TheFuturesSchool.com](http://www.TheFuturesSchool.com)

Program participants will:

- Identify emerging trends and weak signals on the horizon.
- Build "maps of the future" that generate successful strategies, actions and organizational narratives.
- Harness the future to make better decisions today.

[info@TheFuturesSchool.com](mailto:info@TheFuturesSchool.com)