CORE
CONCEPT

Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight for Executive Leaders

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Technical depth: Conceptual · **Practical mode:** Case study

Introduction

Many boards and executive teams still set strategy against a single forecast, then find that energy shocks, new technologies, regulation or shifts in demand overturn the assumptions it rested on. Without a disciplined way to explore several plausible futures, organisations react late and commit capital to plans that only work in one world. This Core Concept course equips senior leaders to commission, challenge and use scenario and foresight work, from horizon scanning to stress-testing strategy. Participants work through multi-sector cases and leave with a Strategic Foresight Brief: a scenario set, strategic options and a signpost dashboard for their organisation.

Course Objectives

- Distinguish forecasting, scenario planning and strategic foresight, and decide which approach a strategic question requires
- Direct horizon scanning and driver analysis that separate predetermined elements from critical uncertainties
- Commission and challenge scenario sets built with the 2x2 matrix, Three Horizons and Causal Layered Analysis
- Stress-test current strategy, investment options and risk appetite against contrasting scenarios
- Establish signposts, early-warning indicators and a governance cadence that link foresight to strategic decisions
- Present a Strategic Foresight Brief to a board or executive committee

Target Audience

- Executives accountable for corporate strategy and long-range planning
- Board members and committee chairs overseeing strategic direction and emerging risk
- Heads of strategy, planning and transformation offices who commission foresight work
- Senior leaders of business units exposed to technology, market or policy disruption
- Executives responsible for enterprise risk and organisational resilience
- Senior policy and planning leaders in public and non-profit organisations

Course Outline

Day 1: Foresight Foundations and the Strategic Context

- Forecasting Versus Foresight: The Voros Futures Cone of Possible, Plausible and Probable Futures
- Foresight Maturity Model Self-Assessment of the Organisation
- Horizon Scanning With the STEEPLE Framework
- Weak Signals and Emerging Issues Capture in a Signal Register
- Assumption Audit of the Current Strategy Using Assumption-Based Planning

Day 2: Scenario and Foresight Methods

- Intuitive Logics Scenario Method and the 2x2 Critical Uncertainty Matrix
- Three Horizons Framework for Transition Pathways
- Futures Triangle and Causal Layered Analysis
- Delphi Method for Structured Expert Judgement
- Emerging Risk Guidance in ISO/TS 31050 Alongside ISO 31000

Day 3: Building and Using Scenarios

- Driver Impact-Uncertainty Grid and Critical Uncertainty Selection
- Scenario Narrative Construction and Plausibility Tests
- Futures Wheel for First- and Second-Order Implications
- Backcasting From a Preferred Future to Present-Day Decisions
- Scenario Communication Pack for Boards and Executive Committees

Day 4: Stress-Testing Strategy and Governing Foresight

- Strategy Wind Tunnelling Across Contrasting Scenarios
- No-Regret Moves, Options and Big Bets Portfolio
- Signpost and Early-Warning Indicator Dashboard Design
- Cognitive Bias Controls: Groupthink, Anchoring and Pre-Mortem Analysis
- Foresight Governance: Ownership, Cadence and Link to the Strategic Planning Cycle

Day 5: Case Work and the Strategic Foresight Brief

- Energy Transition Case Study: Scenario Set Review and Challenge
- Healthcare Delivery Case Study: Wind Tunnelling a Five-Year Strategy
- Scenario Set Drafting for an Own Organisation
- Strategic Foresight Brief Drafting With Signpost Dashboard
- Executive Panel Challenge and Brief Defence

Skills You Will Gain

- Horizon Scanning
- Critical Uncertainty Analysis
- Scenario Narrative Development
- Strategy Stress-Testing
- Emerging Risk Oversight
- Futures Literacy
- Strategic Option Framing
- Assumption Testing

Why Attend This Course

- Leave with a Strategic Foresight Brief for your organisation, already challenged by a panel of peers
- Ask sharper questions of strategy teams and advisers who present forecasts, scenarios or long-range plans
- Spot the assumptions in current strategy that would fail first if conditions change
- Compare how executives from energy, healthcare, finance and public service anticipate disruption

Conclusion

Strategies rarely fail for lack of effort; they fail because the assumptions beneath them stop being true. This course moves from horizon scanning and assumption testing, through the principal scenario and foresight methods, to stress-testing strategy and governing foresight so that it shapes real decisions. The final day brings these methods together in a Strategic Foresight Brief that participants take back to their board or executive committee, giving them a structured way to prepare the organisation for more than one future.