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The Futures School Sample Agenda

Day 1 – 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Registration/Pick Up Materials

Welcome and Introductions

Discuss your background and expectations with the group. Acquaint yourself with the focal issue you will be working with for the next three days.

Introduction to Strategic Foresight

Understand the fundamental ideas in the field and the importance of employing the principles and tools found within Futures Thinking to discover unseen opportunities and thrive in a world of complex ideas and practices. Take a personal assessment to understand how you think about the future and how that impacts the actions you take today.

iSee: Headlines from Today and Ladder of Inference (LOI)

Learn how our mental “filters” can impact our ability to effectively research and analyze trends and emerging issues. Discover a tool that describes the thinking process we go through, usually without realizing it, to get from data to decision and action.

Trend Keynote

Explore the colliding trends in society, technology, the economy, the environment, and policy that are shaping the future of our globally connected world.

Introduction to Environmental Scanning

Familiarize yourself with the fundamentals of becoming a robust scanner. Learn basic terminology and understand how to identify emerging issues, ideas, concepts and “weak” signals that are on the periphery of society, technology, the environment, the economy, and policy.

Sci-Fi Futures

Immerse yourself in an engaging multi-media activity that demonstrates the power of shifting our mindsets from plausible to provocative.

TFS Project Research Brief

Participate in an activity to immerse yourself in the research, which includes excerpts from today’s articles, and trends that will impact your project focal issue.

Networking Hour

After a long day of learning, relax in an informal hang-out session with your fellow attendees. Get to know each other and exchange ideas.

Day Two Introduction

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)

Discover how the CLA model promotes the deeper understanding of issues and events by examining their root causes. You'll see how altering your mindset leads to better Futures Thinking, and how CLA provides a view toward common purpose and goals, improving collaboration as well as facilitating effective change.

Creating an Environmental Scanning System

Learn how to scan both physically and digitally, how to create a trend database through an online bookmarking service, and how to tag scan hits (i.e., articles, websites, journals, etc.) for accurate discovery, recovery, and analysis.

Scanning

Roll up your sleeves as you apply your learnings from Day One and begin scanning and tagging articles critical to the focal issue.

Trend Cards

Author your own trend cards to explore emerging issues in society, technology, the economy, the environment, and policy. Work with your team to capture relevant trends and consider the values underlying them as well as the implications that may result.

Pattern and Sensemaking

Become a pattern and sensemaker – learn how to look beyond obvious trends and issues so that you can make sense of what is emerging as a result of converging and colliding ideas, values, signals, and technologies. You are beginning to move from isolated trends to larger patterns of impact, themes of focus, and narratives of change, all serving as information for scenario building.

Introduction to Scenario Development

Add the critical tool of Scenario Development to your foresight toolkit. Learn how well-crafted scenarios challenge conventional wisdom, initiate collaborative dialogue and discussion, and create the possibility of genuine transformation and change.

iSee: Headlines from the Future

Launch your audience into the future by creating news headlines from the year 2030. Leveraging your learnings from Day One, your group will act as journalists to imagine how today's trends could manifest in transformative, market, and fortress environments. These headlines not only help you break through assumptions to create better Futures Thinking, but also serve as the starting point for your scenarios.

Futures Wheels

Step into the future and map the short-, mid-, and long-range impacts and implications from one of your trends or patterns. Your work will not only inform your team's scenarios but also create a space for participatory and collaborative strategy development.

Day Three Introduction

Scenario Fields Process to Build Robust Scenarios

Map the future of your focal issue using this powerful “plug and play” tool. Scenario Fields lets you take ownership of the process and outcomes, and realize the value of scenario planning as a critical element of ongoing strategy development. As teams you will create the scaffolding for your narrative using the trends, drivers, patterns, and implications from the prior two days as fodder for your stories.

Team Scenario Report Outs

Showcase your team’s work and receive feedback from the larger group.

Strategic Designs

Jump start your strategic planning efforts with Strategic Designs, a set of tools which turn your scenarios into powerful strategy testing and creation vehicles.

Reflections: Learn, Unlearn, Relearn

Share your learnings (and “unlearnings”) as we recap a successful three days of The Futures School. Solidify the connections with your TFS peers, discussing how you plan on applying the tools and techniques from the program.