

Scenario thinking

Whether you are developing a strategy for entering a new market, rethinking your mission, or planning your next career move, you need to make decisions and develop robust solutions in the face of change and uncertainty.

But in a world of change, it is easy to get stuck using familiar mental maps to navigate through new territory. This can lead to poor or even dangerous decision making.

We need to learn to make these maps visible to ourselves, ask if the map is correct, how it may need to change and what the alternatives are.

Scenario thinking helps you develop the capacity to look into the future through a new lens and peer beyond the blind-spots of your current mental map to see challenges and opportunities that are not immediately apparent.

This tool-for-thinking helps you break free from the assumptions that can limit your understanding of the arena you want to affect.

- You start with the most important uncertainties facing you as you make your decision.
- You then think about the different scenarios that can arise based on the various ways the uncertainties can play out.
- Finally you ask whether your strategy is effective across the scenarios you envision.

This process can surface policy options and strategies that are not obvious. It captures not just what is on the agenda currently, but important realities that are off the agenda.

Scenario thinking can be done either one-on-one or in a workshop setting with a team. It helps you learn to think outside of your comfort zone. In addition to developing new solutions and strategies, you will develop the ability to innovate and to look at a familiar landscape through fresh eyes.

“Problems cannot be solved from the same state of awareness that created them”

–Albert Einstein