Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning for Leaders Training Course



Ref: #CS9813

Course Introduction / Overview:

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, traditional strategic planning based on historical data is no longer sufficient for sustainable success. This course is designed to equip leaders with the essential skills of strategic foresight and scenario planning, transforming their approach from reactive problem-solving to proactive future-shaping. We delve into the methodologies that enable organizations to anticipate disruptive changes, identify emerging opportunities, and build robust strategies that are resilient across a range of plausible futures. As pioneering thinker Peter Schwartz articulated in his seminal work, "The Art of the Long View", the goal is not to predict the future, but to develop a deeper understanding of the forces driving change and to make better decisions in the present. At BIG BEN Training Center, this program moves beyond mere theory, providing a hands-on, immersive experience in developing a foresight mindset. Participants will learn to systematically scan the horizon for weak signals, analyze trends, and construct compelling scenarios that challenge assumptions and inspire innovation, ultimately future-proofing their organizations against uncertainty and positioning them for long-term growth and relevance.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- C-Suite Executives including CEOs, CFOs, and COOs.
- Senior and Mid-Level Managers.
- Heads of Strategic Planning and Corporate Development.
- Directors of Innovation and Research & Development.
- Risk Management Professionals and Analysts.
- Government Policy Makers and Public Sector Leaders.
- Business Consultants and Advisors.
- Project and Program Managers.
- Entrepreneurs and Business Owners.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Financial Services and Banking.
- Technology and Telecommunications.
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals.
- Energy, Oil, and Gas.
- Manufacturing and Engineering.
- Government Agencies and Public Administration.
- Non-Profit and Non-Governmental Organizations.
- Consulting and Professional Services.
- Retail and Consumer Goods.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Strategic Planning and Corporate Strategy.
- Research and Development (R&D).
- Risk Management and Compliance.
- Marketing and Market Intelligence.
- Finance and Investment.
- Operations Management.
- Human Resources and Organizational Development.
- Product Development and Innovation.
- Public Relations and Corporate Affairs.

Course Offerings:

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

- Apply systematic foresight methodologies to identify emerging trends and weak signals.
- Conduct comprehensive environmental scanning using tools like PESTLE and STEEP analysis.
- Master the end-to-end process of developing strategic scenarios.
- Identify and analyze key drivers of change and critical uncertainties impacting their industry.
- Construct a set of robust, plausible, and challenging future scenarios.
- Use scenarios to test the resilience of current strategies through a process known as wind-tunneling.
- Develop adaptive strategies that are effective across multiple potential futures.
- Integrate foresight principles into the organization's strategic planning and decision-making cycles.
- Foster a culture of proactive, future-oriented thinking within their teams and organization.
- Communicate complex future possibilities effectively to stakeholders to build consensus and drive action.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, experiential, and directly applicable to the participant's professional context. We believe that mastering strategic foresight is not a passive activity but an engaged practice. Therefore, the course heavily emphasizes a "learning by doing" approach. Participants will move beyond theoretical lectures to engage in dynamic group discussions, collaborative workshops, and practical exercises. A significant portion of the training is dedicated to hands-on scenario-building sessions where teams will work on real-world or industry-specific case studies to apply the concepts learned in real-time. This immersive process is facilitated by expert instructors who provide continuous guidance and personalized feedback. The curriculum incorporates a blend of analytical frameworks, creative thinking techniques, and strategic dialogue. Peer-to-peer learning is encouraged through structured feedback rounds and team presentations, allowing participants to gain diverse perspectives and refine their insights. This comprehensive and practical approach ensures that attendees leave not just with new knowledge, but with the confidence and skills to implement foresight and scenario planning methodologies within their own organizations immediately.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of Strategic Foresight and Futures Thinking

- Introduction to the concepts of foresight and futures studies.
- Distinguishing between forecasting, prediction, and foresight.
- Understanding the VUCA world and the need for strategic agility.
- Exploring different schools of thought in futures thinking.
- The core components of a foresight-driven organization.
- Identifying and overcoming cognitive biases in strategic thinking.
- Introduction to the foresight process from scanning to strategy.

Unit Two: Mastering Environmental Scanning and Trend Analysis

- The principles of systematic horizon scanning.
- Techniques for identifying trends, megatrends, and weak signals.
- Utilizing frameworks like PESTLE, STEEP, and STEEPV for comprehensive analysis.
- Methods for gathering strategic intelligence from diverse sources.
- Conducting trend analysis and impact assessment.
- Mapping drivers of change and understanding their interconnections.
- Practical workshop on building a trend and driver map.

Unit Three: The Art and Science of Scenario Planning

- An in-depth introduction to the scenario planning methodology.
- The history and evolution of scenario planning in corporate strategy.
- Identifying focal issues and critical decision points.
- Uncovering key uncertainties and driving forces.
- Developing a scenario logic and framework.
- Using the 2x2 matrix and alternative scenario-building techniques.
- Workshop on defining the core axes of uncertainty for a case study.

Unit Four: Building and Utilizing Strategic Scenarios

- The process of crafting rich and compelling scenario narratives.
- Giving scenarios memorable names and detailed storylines.
- Identifying implications and strategic challenges within each scenario.
- Developing early warning signals and indicators for each scenario.
- Using scenarios for "wind-tunneling" and stress-testing existing strategies.
- Generating and evaluating new strategic options.
- Facilitating a scenario-based strategic conversation.

Unit Five: Embedding Foresight into Organizational Strategy and Culture

- Bridging the gap between future scenarios and current strategic decisions.
- Developing adaptive and robust strategies for an uncertain future.
- Creating a strategic action plan based on foresight insights.
- Communicating foresight findings to leadership and stakeholders.
- Building a sustainable foresight capability within the organization.
- Fostering a culture that embraces uncertainty and proactive thinking.
- Developing a personal action plan for implementing foresight.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How might an organization's ethical framework need to evolve when its strategic decisions are based on probabilistic future scenarios rather than historical certainties?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by moving beyond a purely academic or tool-based approach to strategic foresight. While many programs focus on teaching the mechanics of frameworks, our curriculum is designed to cultivate a genuine "foresight mindset" in leaders. The core emphasis is on the practical application of these skills to navigate real-world ambiguity and make superior strategic decisions under pressure. We prioritize the art of strategic conversation and narrative-building, recognizing that the power of scenarios lies not just in their analytical rigor but in their ability to challenge mental models and align stakeholders around a shared understanding of the future landscape. Unlike courses that treat foresight as a separate, isolated function, our program is structured to help participants integrate these practices directly into their organization's core strategic planning and innovation cycles. The methodology is deeply experiential, focusing on collaborative workshops and case studies relevant to the participants' industries. This ensures that learning is not just theoretical but immediately transferable, empowering leaders to build organizational resilience and create proactive, future-ready strategies from day one.