Strategic Futures Thinking and Scenario Planning Training Course



26 - 30 Oct 2026

Vienna

5800 € (Per Person)

Ref: #INN8023_115378

Course Introduction / Overview:

In today's era of unprecedented volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, traditional strategic planning is no longer sufficient to secure long-term success. This course provides a robust framework for navigating the future by mastering the disciplines of strategic futures thinking and scenario planning. Participants will learn to move beyond simple forecasting to explore a range of plausible futures, enabling them to build more resilient and adaptive strategies. Drawing on foundational concepts from pioneers like Peter Schwartz, author of the seminal work "The Art of the Long View", this program demystifies the process of systematic foresight. BIG BEN Training Center has meticulously designed this immersive experience to equip leaders and strategists with the practical tools and mindset needed to anticipate change, identify emerging opportunities and threats, and make better decisions under uncertainty. This is not about predicting the future; it is about preparing your organization to thrive in whichever future unfolds by developing strategic agility and a proactive, forward-looking culture.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- C-Suite Executives and Senior Leadership Teams.
- Directors and Heads of Strategic Planning.
- Risk Management and Compliance Professionals.
- Innovation and Research & Development Managers.
- Business Development and Market Intelligence Analysts.
- Product and Project Managers.
- Government Officials and Public Policy Planners.
- Entrepreneurs and Business Owners.
- Management Consultants.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Technology and Telecommunications.
- Financial Services, Banking, and Insurance.
- Energy, Utilities, and Natural Resources.
- Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals, and Biotechnology.
- Government, Public Sector, and Non-Profit Organizations.
- Manufacturing and Industrial Goods.
- Consumer Goods and Retail.
- Aerospace and Defense.
- Professional Services and Consulting.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Corporate Strategy and Strategic Planning.
- Risk Management and Internal Audit.
- Research and Development (R&D).
- Marketing and Competitive Intelligence.
- Finance and Investment Analysis.
- Operations and Supply Chain Management.
- Human Resources and Organizational Development.
- Innovation and New Product Development.
- Executive Leadership Offices.

Course Offerings:

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

- Develop a systematic framework for scanning the external environment for drivers of change.
- Identify and analyze weak signals, trends, and potential disruptions.
- Apply various foresight methodologies to understand complex systems.
- Construct a set of distinct, plausible, and challenging scenarios for the future.
- Use scenarios to stress-test existing strategies and business models.
- Facilitate strategic conversations about the future within their teams.
- Formulate robust and adaptive strategies that are resilient across multiple futures.
- Integrate futures thinking and scenario planning into the organization's strategic management cycle.
- Cultivate a proactive, future-oriented mindset within their organizational culture.
- Communicate complex future insights effectively to key stakeholders and decision-makers.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, engaging, and application-focused. We believe that mastering strategic foresight is achieved through doing, not just listening. The course blends expert-led presentations on core theories and frameworks with intensive, hands-on workshops and practical exercises. Participants will work in teams to analyze real-world case studies, applying tools like horizon scanning and trend analysis to complex business challenges. A significant portion of the program is dedicated to a guided scenario-building simulation, where teams will develop their own set of future scenarios from scratch and use them to evaluate strategic options. This immersive approach is reinforced by facilitated group discussions, peer-to-peer learning, and constructive feedback sessions. Our expert facilitators create a dynamic learning environment that encourages critical thinking, creative exploration, and the direct application of new skills to the participants' own organizational contexts, ensuring they leave with actionable insights and a clear path for implementation.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of Strategic Foresight and Futures Thinking

- Introduction to the concepts of foresight and futures thinking.
- Understanding the VUCA world and its impact on strategic planning.
- Differentiating between forecasting, prediction, and strategic foresight.
- The history and evolution of future studies as a discipline.
- Exploring the core principles of a 'futures mindset'.
- The role of assumptions and mental models in shaping our view of the future.
- Overview of the complete strategic foresight process from scanning to strategy.

Unit Two: The Foresight Toolkit - Scanning and Framing

- Mastering the art of horizon scanning for external changes.
- Utilizing frameworks like PESTLE and STEEP for comprehensive analysis.
- Identifying and interpreting key drivers of change and critical uncertainties.
- The methodology for detecting 'weak signals' of potential disruption.
- Techniques for trend analysis and extrapolation.
- Framing the focal question for a foresight project.
- Mapping systems and understanding interconnections between driving forces.

Unit Three: The Art and Science of Scenario Planning

- Introduction to the logic and purpose of scenario planning.
- The deductive method of scenario building based on key uncertainties.
- Developing the building blocks of compelling scenario narratives.
- Techniques for creating scenarios that are plausible, relevant, and challenging.
- Moving from a scenario matrix to rich, detailed stories of the future.
- Common pitfalls in scenario development and how to avoid them.
- Workshop: Building a set of four distinct future scenarios in teams.

Unit Four: From Scenarios to Strategy - Decision Making Under Uncertainty

- Using scenarios as a tool for 'wind tunneling' and stress-testing current strategies.
- Identifying strategic risks and opportunities within each scenario.
- Developing robust strategies that perform well across multiple futures.
- Formulating adaptive strategies with clear signposts and trigger points.
- Implications testing and assessing the impact of scenarios on the organization.
- Prioritizing strategic initiatives based on scenario analysis.
- Communicating scenario outcomes to leadership for strategic decision-making.

Unit Five: Embedding Foresight - Cultivating a Future-Ready Organization

- Strategies for integrating foresight into the annual strategic planning cycle.
- Building a 'community of practice' for foresight within the organization.
- Techniques for fostering a proactive and future-oriented organizational culture.
- The role of leadership in championing and sponsoring foresight activities.
- Developing a continuous process for monitoring signposts and updating scenarios.
- Creating a final action plan for implementing foresight in your role.
- Course wrap-up, final Q&A, and personal commitment to action.

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 can organizations effectively differentiate between a 'weak signal' of a potential disruptive change and simple 'market noise' without succumbing to either paralysis or overreaction?

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

This course distinguishes itself by moving beyond a purely theoretical or tool-based approach to strategic foresight. While participants will master essential techniques, the core focus is on cultivating a 'futures mindset' a new way of thinking that becomes an integral part of a leader's strategic toolkit. We emphasize the 'art' of foresight as much as the 'science', focusing on narrative construction, strategic conversation, and the interpretation of complex patterns, skills often overlooked in more technical programs. The curriculum is deeply rooted in established academic principles, such as those presented by Peter Schwartz, but is delivered through a highly practical, hands-on methodology. Unlike courses that end with the creation of scenarios, our program dedicates significant time to the crucial next steps: using those scenarios to stress-test existing plans and formulate genuinely robust, adaptive strategies. The ultimate goal is not just to teach a process, but to build lasting capability, empowering participants to lead their organizations with greater confidence and agility in an uncertain world.