Finding the Future Faster with the Implications Wheel®

Reduce Risks.
Identify Opportunities.
Improve Outcomes.

Presented by Joel A. Barker, futurist
Christopher G. Kenny, President, STAR Group, LLC

“Unintended Consequences”
The Black Swan by Nassim Taleb

Articulates the dilemma of unintended consequences but incorrectly claims that “Black Swans” cannot be anticipated

Unintended Consequences (Five Publications)

One 20th Century Approach

• Lists of threats and opportunities
• Dilemma:
  – Random
  – Not prioritized
  – Disconnected

What if...
You could identify potential implications, both positive and negative, well in advance of their occurrence?

What if...
You could dramatically reduce uncertainty about impending change?
What if...

- You had a process that:
  - Creates structured discussions
  - Allows wide ranging exploration yet connects all the elements
  - Easy to learn
  - Fast

Strategic Exploration

- What you do before you do your strategic planning
- Several tools for exploring
- Focus today is on the Implications Wheel®

Wagon Train Scouts: an Analogy

- Before the wagon masters rolled their wagons, they sent out their scouts
- What was the focus of their scouting?
  - Threats
  - Opportunities
  - Lay of the land

Wagon Train Scouts: an Analogy

- Before the wagon masters rolled their wagons, they sent out their scouts
- What was the focus of their scouting?
  - Threats
  - Opportunities
  - Lay of the land

Essence of “Scouting”

- Fast
- Qualitative
- A sampling
- Many directions
- Mapping
- Decision enhancing

The Implications Wheel®

- Structured discussion process for “scouting the future”
- Same attributes as scouting
- Small groups, individuals, remote
- Different horizon
What Does It Look Like?

- Concentric circles and spokes
- Grows bigger and broader as you fill it out

Potential Topics

- Innovations:
- Emerging trends
- Mergers
- New regulations
- New internal policies
- Strategic objectives
- Significant events

Multicultural Congregational Support | www.pcusa.org/multicultural
### Desirability Scale

- **+5** Extremely desirable
- **+4** Very desirable
- **+3** Desirable
- **+2** Somewhat desirable
- **+1** Better than nothing
- **0** Neither
- **−1** A nag
- **−2** Somewhat undesirable
- **−3** Undesirable
- **−4** Very undesirable
- **−5** Extremely undesirable

### Special Scores

- **+50** — A triumph
- **−50** — A catastrophe

### Likelihood

- **9** — Highly likely to occur
- **8** — Very likely to occur
- **7** — Fairly likely to occur
- **6** — Likely to occur
- **5-50/50** — Likely to occur
- **4** — Unlikely to occur
- **3** — Fairly unlikely to occur
- **2** — Very unlikely to occur
- **1** — Highly unlikely to occur

### Results/Benefits

- A broad range of specific possible implications identified quickly
- They are “mapped”/connected so you can see the pathways of consequence
- They are scored for desirability and likelihood of occurrence so you can prioritize

### I-Wheel Benefits

- Allows teams with great diversity to work together for everyone’s advantage
- Can work in a wide range of group settings
- Can be done remotely so you can engage people from anywhere in the world

### Other I-Wheel Benefits

- Highlights implications in a balanced way—positives as well as negatives
- Encourages participants to listen to the other side
- Extremely fast compared to other methods
- Can be done in complete isolation if high level of security is required

---

Multicultural Congregational Support | www.pcusa.org/multicultural
I-Wheel® Stories

- Kodak
- NASA
- VHA Avian Bird Flu epidemic
- St Paul WiFi project
- Fund raising projects

Summary I-Wheels

- Most positive + likelihood
- Most negative + likelihood
- 50’s no matter what the likelihood
- Black swans
- Timing
- Tags
Summary Wheels

- Diversity scoring/minority reports
- Homogeneous group scoring
- Overlays of score sets (2 at a time)
- Disagreements between groups—Chris
- Agreements between groups—Chris
- Weighted scoring comparisons

I-Wheel Attributes

Here’s what we’ve learned about the I-Wheel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Attribute</th>
<th>Process Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diverse viewpoints</td>
<td>Democratic process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designed to gather information</td>
<td>Based on “possibilities” thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates greater understanding of possible outcomes</td>
<td>Identifies areas of potential conflict and opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So how do we apply the I-Wheel to stakeholder engagement and public outreach?

Big Results from Doing an I-Wheel

You have an inclusive process that allows you to identify potential implications and then monitor their unfolding.

Big Results from Doing an I-Wheel

You reduce levels of uncertainty by making explicit potential long term implications both positive and negative.

Big Results from Doing an I-Wheel

You identify key implications which allow you to construct a clearer plan for overcoming future challenges and optimizing future benefits.
Big Results from Doing an I-Wheel

You see a larger horizon of events over a longer horizon of time within an organized framework.

Final Thought

• The 21st century challenge:

We have to become much smarter at anticipating long term consequences of our actions.