BACC Futuring Workshop September 14, 2018

The Art and Science of Looking at the Future: Tapping Your Inner Futurist

Note Joanie Buckley did not participate in today's workshop.

The day began with a welcome from BACC President Paul Demuth. He talked about the history and role of the organization, our experience with last year's Envisioning the Future conference. BACC Futuring Team chairman Dave Wegge talked about BACC's hopes for the Futuring project and its benefits for local organizations and communities. BACC views the participants as partners as we develop futuring tools for use here. "Parents of our future rather than children of our past." Nan Nelson, Secretary of BACC introduced herself and said that she would be taking notes of the day's activities.

WARM UPS

The group introduced themselves and added words describing the Green Bay area in 2030: "vibrant, safe, dynamic, collaborative, transforming, healthy, together, and innovative." Workshop leader Garry Golden introduced himself and talked about what he does professionally: mainly assisting organizations to deal with future change, and with a significant involvement in collaborative community-wide future thinking in Houston, TX. He previewed the activities of the day.

The first warm-up exercise was describing the first or early memorable time that you were asked to think about the future…. what was it, how did you do it, what was the outcome? Several people shared with the group what they had each discussed with a partner. OBS: This exercise begins futuring with the personal and then widens out to the organization. Some interesting comments were shared: You can have an impact by "coming home" to our area that you don't have in larger metropolitan areas. Data points from history are good, but we need to anticipate the future in order to better decisions, especially when there is uncertainty. Overcoming fear of change is a challenge, especially for folks whose current jobs are in danger because of technological changes.

Garry discussed definitions of foresight and futuring: the art & science of anticipating and leading change. The purpose of foresight: to make better decisions when you have uncertainty.

The second warmup exercise was entitled "More or less" Which "bucket" is more full: the changes seen in the last 20 years versus the changes likely to occur in the next 20 years? Will this change be accelerating with change cycles being compressed? The group then shared types of dynamic and disruptive changes expected: technology, global competition and interdependence, demographic diversification, data connectivity and AI creating the Internet of Things, reduced face-to-face human connectivity. Will change continue to accelerate or will there be a push back: slow down! What will not change in your organization no matter what? Give comfort in the midst of fear of change. OBS: this exercise gives participants to all have voice, but it must end with a calming influence, listing things that will NOT change: human creativity, place-based experiences, love & conflict, tools, things from the particular company. We need to talk about happiness, equity & justice, and other foundational issues.

OBS: We forgot to do the "That's Great!" warmup to get people to think out of their usual grooves.

HISTORY & EVOLUTION OF FORESIGHT

Garry talked about the history of future thinking and foresight. In the US it traces back to the 1930s: sociologist William Ogburn who first looked at the lag of social adaptation to technology. In the 1950s the Rand Institute and the Hudson Institute first developed "scenario-based" decision making. In the 1970s Shell brought scenario planning into the corporate world. Systems-based simulation was introduced in the "The Limits to Growth" by the Club of Rome in the 1970s—overshoot and collapse. In the 1980s was the rise of corporate strategic thinking and introduction of the "cost curve." Now we are in an era of integration and intervention where future thinking is being brought into many planning processes.

FORESIGHT 101

Futurists model multiple outcomes under multiple time horizons. Then we must spot plausible outcomes. We develop stories or scenarios about likely futures. As we proceed we need to discover signs of change showing where we are heading in the cone of plausibility. U of Hawaii has developed *Four Futures Thinking*: 1) contained growth, 2) disciplined constrained, 3) transformed, and 4) decline/collapse. Workshop expectation: We will deliver to our organizations portraits of the Four Futures of each of our organizations. Futurists have identified three mechanism of change: 1) trends (more or less of something, moving at a certain rate in a certain direction), 2) events (breaks from the past that cannot be forecasted, think of them in scenarios), and 3) choices (desired future, what we want to be, a visioning process). Short term: trends are most determinative, in the long term, events and choices take over as uncertainty increases.

The fundamental stages and activities of foresight:

- Investigate: identify and monitor change through horizon scanning or signals scanning, analyzing emerging issues, and monitoring leading versus lagging indicators. Change drivers include 1) demographic & social, 2) technological, 3) economic, 4) environment & natural resources, and 5) legal & political.
- Imagine: explore implications, extrapolate trends to make forecasts, develop scenarios
- Inspire: communicate the need for change through backcasting and visioning, planning, goal setting and road mapping

Foresight methodologies include tools that are qualitative, quantitative and hybrids of them. Garry will deliver a tool set to the participants.

An initial thing to do in an organization is to do an assessment of how mature the organization is in terms of foresight. Garry will be providing tools so that workshop participants will be able to assess their organization's maturity and future preparedness by December.

Garry is urging participants to get one of three recommended books and read it. He talked about which organizations are hiring futurists and why.

FIRST EXERCISE: The STEEP Activity

The group was asked to identify trends, issues, changes, questions that are affecting the Future of Work in either their organization or in the community, write one on each post it note, and place each note on one of the five change-factor charts based on a high/low quadrant of knowledge and impact. OBS:

When leading a group to do this, give examples, but let the quantity and distribution of comments fall naturally and then examine that too. We need to help our organizations research areas where there is high importance and low knowledge; we need to have some domain knowledge experts in the room to do this well. Select an unresolved issue off the STEEP board; resolve this headline-type sentence one way or another by creating a scenario story, then force people to discuss it as the center of a Futures Wheel.

Flip chart photos:
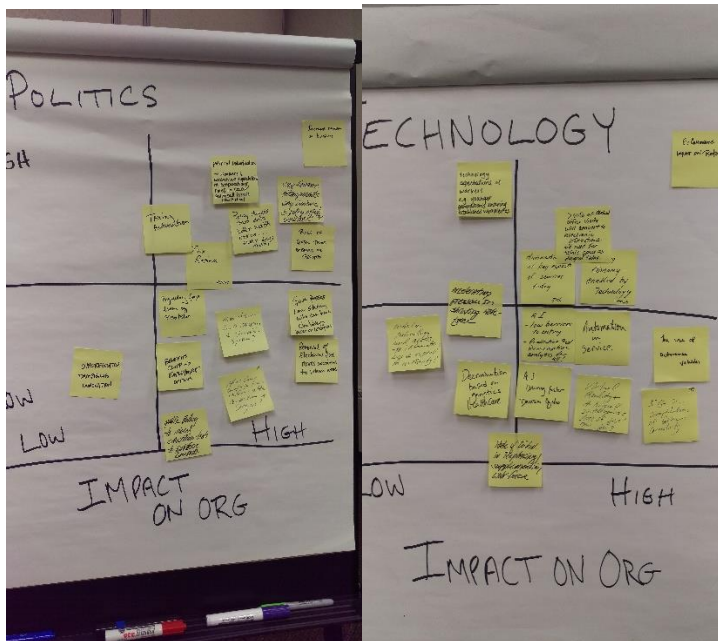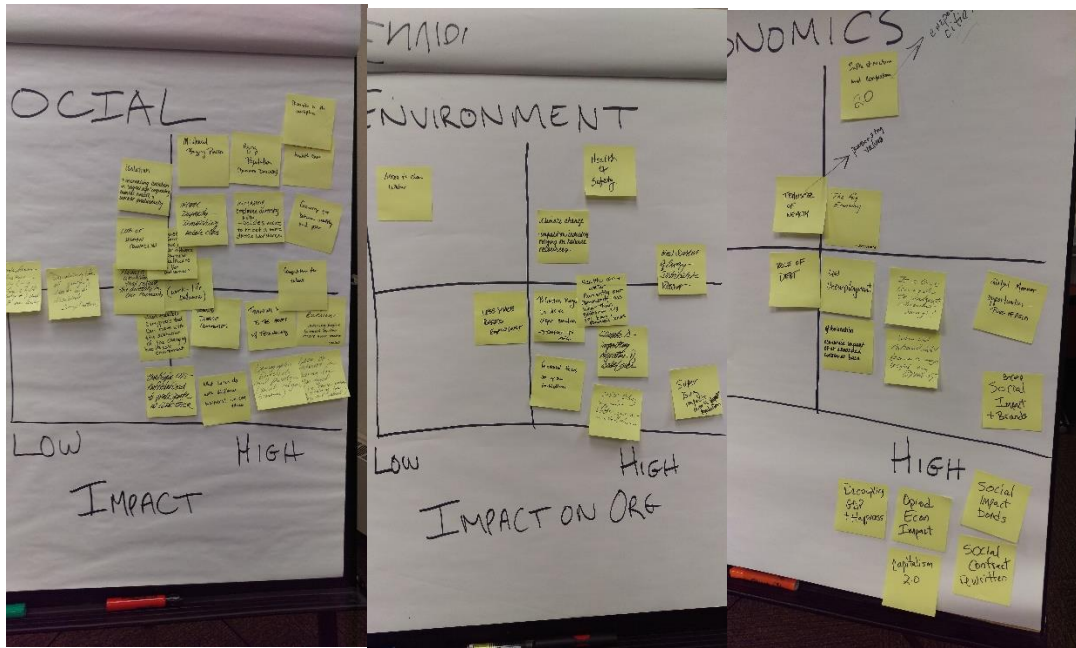
See separate pages of flip chart transcriptions at the end of these notes.

PRESENTATION: Demographics

Garry presented population pyramids showing societies by age—the demographic transition model which describes the evolution of societies over time. First, many young people in the pre-industrial age; next a more even pyramid; then in the industrial age a stationary period with equal numbers in each age group (most desirable); finally a contracting period with few births and immigration. The population pyramid varies greatly by metro vs. rural: metros are healthy while rural are actually inverted. Brown County is fairly healthy, but like other areas can expect a large impact from aging baby boomers. Europe and especially China & Japan are not healthy, with high numbers of aging population. In India there are huge numbers of young entering the workforce. We can foresee some events from these trends: US expanding social safety net; China could stall; South Asia could become an economic powerhouse. What is the "demographics is destiny" story that each participant will tell colleagues? How will demographic transitions impact the future of work? Think about demographic implications for politics: what rural states have outsize impact on the electoral college; how could a change in the electoral college affect decision making on issues like distribution of workforce training dollars? How does changing population ethnicity affect decision making? How can we make demographic data more accessible to public and private decision makers locally?

PRESENTATION: Moving Beyond the Resume with Experience Data

Garry talked about a world using the "experience graph" instead of the resume to profile individuals. This type of graph would include information on the learning experiences, skill sets and competencies of individuals rather than a backward look at time in a job. Creepy versus compelling data is a factor that will have to be addressed by every organization as more services are delivered online, and they are prescriptive or curated and aimed at outcomes. For example, health data is outcome-driven. Experience data or performance data (detailed realtime data on activities and experiences "I did this") are organized into systems, such as learning management systems.   Experience data will begin appearing in the workforce soon. People will begin to embrace this type of "experience capture analytics" such as what you "like" and "share" online, what you attend, what you read/view online, what you self-publish, who you are linked to. Experience data will become the most valuable digital asset of any organization; to do this we will move from spreadsheets to graph analytics (with nodes and relationships) to structure data. This experience data is more predictive and prescriptive because it has connections, pathways, journeys and process outcomes that are modeled/graphed and can be analyzed and replicated. Example: LinkedIn's Economic Graph.

PRESENTATION: Era-Based Change

The Three-Horizons model of change: First horizon: immediately visible; Second horizon: expected in the industry and somewhat visible; third horizon: things for which there is no evidence yet but some have envisioned it.

Over time a technology or business concept performs along an "S" curve—emerging in a slow curve, then rapid change in an accelerating upward curve, then a plateau of mainstreaming and diminishing returns. An era-based strategy would move from one small "s" curve to the next in an ascending innovation engine, with each innovation depending and growing out of those before. Example: the

mobility transition from rail to car/truck to airplane, then to electric vehicles, assisted or autonomous vehicles, then sub-orbital space. Earlier eras get commoditized but don't actually disappear. Futurists identify and monitor change—they look for signals of change. For example, an early signal of self-driving vehicles came from DARPA in 2004 who sponsored a self-driving car challenge in an effort to find ways to deliver military supplies in a war zone. Google's self-driving announcement came in 2010, and now we are about to enter the rapid state of change. Futurists try to figure out where various change factors are in their "s" curves. Each participant then sketched an era-based "s" curve model of their industry's current era and the anticipated emerging era, and answered some questions about it. The goals of the exercise are to identify key differences in strategy and market conditions across current and emerging eras of growth, to surface assumptions that may be preserved or discarded across the "s" curve era transition, and to find three potential opportunities (hunting ground) for future growth or social impact. OBS: Some participants suggested that language be developed for the exercise that better reflects non-profits—perhaps refer to "threats" as opposed to "competitors" and talk about organizational relevancy. Participants shared some of their initial thoughts as they look ahead to new eras in their fields.

TREND CARDS and FUTURES WHEEL

Among the techniques to turn signals into stories are those ranging from intuitive sketches to fully-researched forecasts. We looked at two examples:

The first tool presented is **Trend Cards** which are used for sparking brainstorming sessions. Together the group will create a trend card deck, summarizing the signals that are being observed to create a small printable object that is used to help people create their own scenarios. In use, an event card is then issued that describes a factor taking place in the future that affects the trend cards being used. The trend card and event prompt are used together to brainstorm scenarios. Participants will learn how to develop signal teams to help their organizations spot trends.

The next tool presented is the **Futures Wheel**. It begins with the creation of provocative but plausible news headlines from 2028. From this, second, third and fourth order implications are imagined. What can be imagined can then be prepared for. A smaller-size worksheet version of the exercise was also offered. OBS: help people break away from the generic and into a provocative mini-story that makes the issue concrete and real. This will really test your ability to make mental leaps! Futures Wheel is not easy to do, but does get easier as you practice and strengthen ability to do mental leaps. Participants will be asked to search for signals of change and then use them as the initial point on a Futures Wheel exercise with their organization's teams. As a result groups can discuss future implications of their decisions, surface organizational responses and decide how the organization will publicly respond.

OBS: terminology and definitions. Could Garry do a glossary of terms from today, or give us a list of terms that refer to the same thing? i.e. Future Opportunities = Signals of Change. Perhaps give people space on the Futures Wheel forms to list the rationale of the path from one box to another.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DAY (from participants)

- Exercises were good; good to have tools.
- Need more on how to find and recognize signals and judge their relative value.
- Demographics is destiny theme was helpful & raised awareness—need sources of timely data.

- My team is good at identifying signals intuitively, but this will be good training on how to translate them into scenarios.
- Just formed a "business intelligence team" so information about signals gathering will be good.
- Liked the group size and mix; networking and learning about other parts of the community is good. Having group variety helps challenge thinking and allows us to speak more freely if not with competitors. Tough to get ethnic diversity in the group—thanks for trying.
- Smaller companies need to figure out how to do this—get more people than the CEO involved… leverage a TEC group to do this together, or get team members involved and trained who would not normally do this.
- The material is engaging—top of mind now is what to do with a signal when we see it.
- Can we transfer this process to a community-wide level through BACC and using participants to pilot?

Challenges observed
- How to get a very large and financially stressed organization to do this—to address something beyond the fires we have to put out today?
- Finding time to do this.
- How to explain the benefit of futuring? OBS: Can we get some of Garry's slides in order to explain this correctly? Is there a video that could be shown to teams in advance of participating in this process? Could we prepare to answer objections as part of our elevator speech on why we should do futuring?

NEXT STEPS

- Next week we will send a recap of the session, materials for the binder and info for assignments.
- Garry will invite each participant to a 15-20 min phone conversation before the next session.
- Next session is October 12, 8 – 11 AM, arrive at 7:45 am in Room 312 at Bemis International Center for video with Garry.
- Feel free to contact each other and share what you are experiencing and the challenges you face.

FLIP CHART TRANSCRIPTIONS: What changes are affecting the World of Work?

Social

High knowledge about this, but low impact:

- Devaluing of youngest, oldest and disabled, impacts?
- Having a workforce that reflects the diversity in our community
- Loss of human connection
- Increasing isolation I digital age impacting mental health and worker productivity
- Breakdown of nuclear family

Low knowledge about this, and low impact:

- Need flexible caregivers than can move with the evolution of the changing healthcare environment
- Enabling disenfranchised to participate in workforce

High knowledge about this, and high impact:

- Millennial buying power
- Income disparity; diminishing middle class
- Employee information and influence on payment in healthcare for "outcomes"
- Work life balance
- Aging population (demand driver)
- Increasing employee diversity—how policies evolve to meet a more diverse workforce
- Diversity in the workplace
- Growing gap between wealthy and poor
- Competition for talent

Low knowledge about this, but high impact:

- Growing diverse communities
- What do we do with displaced workers i.e. coal, tobacco
- Training workers to be adept with technology
- Demographic diversity and pluralism (social, religious, economic)
- Burnout—intensity begins so much earlier—more more more
- Lack of interest in caring for the aged i.e. fewer workers in training, low pay, not valued

Environment

High knowledge about this, but low impact:

- Access to clean water

Low knowledge about this, and low impact:

- Less place based employment

High knowledge about this, and high impact:

- Health and safety
- Climate change; impact on industries relying on natural resources
- New sources of energy, distributive power

Low knowledge about this, but high impact:
- Healthy air and water: currently our community has higher than national average of pancreatic and brain cancer
- Pollution regulation in US versus other countries, impact on manufacturing
- Climate change impacting migration of workforce
- Increased focus on green initiatives
- Will policy support better environmental choices
- Super bug impacts world population

Economics

High knowledge about this, but low impact:
- Transfer of wealth

Low knowledge about this, and low impact:
- Role of debt

High knowledge about this, and high impact:
- Preserving values with transfer of wealth
- Infrastructure and congestion > empowered cities
- The gig economy

Low knowledge about this, but high impact:
- Low unemployment
- Globalization: economic impact of an expanded customer base
- Is a crisis coming due to inadequate retirement savings
- When will national debt become a major weight on opportunity
- Global market opportunities; rise of Asia
- B-Corp social impact and brands
- Decoupling of GDP and happiness
- Economic impact of opioids
- Social impact bonds
- Capitalism 2.0
- Social contract re-written

Politics

High knowledge about this, but low impact:
- None

Low knowledge about this, and low impact:
- Over-regulation dampening innovation

High knowledge about this, and high impact:
- Taxing automation
- Tax reform
- Political polarization affecting workers and consumers expectations of corporate roles in social and political issues (think Nike)

- Policy changes that drive better choices… alcohol, drugs, obesity
- Increased regulation on business
- Very extreme encampments, very divisive and policy affecting workforce
- Role of global trade embraced or resisted

Low knowledge about this, but high impact:
- Regulatory flux driven by red/blue creates future uncertainty
- Benefits cliff > employment options
- Are term limits necessary to transform system
- How can campaign finance reform alter composition of Congress
- Public policy to incent education tied to workforce demand
- Government passes law stating who can have children, based on conditions
- Removal of electoral college moves decisions to urban areas

Technology

High knowledge about this, but low impact:
- Technology expectations of workers as younger workers enter established workplaces

Low knowledge about this, and low impact:
- Accelerating pressure on shrinking workforce
- Mobile technology and access to information: loss of respect for authority
- Healthcare discrimination based on genetics

High knowledge about this, and high impact:
- E-commerce impact on retail
- > 40% of medical office visits will convert to electronic interactions reducing need for clinic spaces as designed today
- Automation of key aspects of services today
- Gig economy enabled by technology

Low knowledge about this, but high impact:
- Artificial Intelligence: low barriers to entry, predictive and prescriptive analytics for all
- AI driving faster decision cycles
- Automation in service tasks
- Virtual reality and artificial intelligence—loss of jobs? New jobs?
- Use of autonomous vehicles
- 5G implications of faster connectivity—enabling Internet of Things
- Rate of technological replacement and supplementation of workforce