

Preface



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The focus of this book is to develop the capability of individuals and organisations through scenario planning, to perceive what is happening in the business environment and to act on this new knowledge. The contextual environment facing organisations has always been complex and dynamic; however, the economic, technological, scientific, social, cultural, and political forces are becoming increasingly complex, along with factors such as mass migration, caliphates, terrorism, rogue states, biodiversity loss and climate change. The consequence is the need to understand the future unknowns is especially high. One of the benefits of scenario planning is that it can provide structure and understanding through exploration and discussions of what is going on in the contextual environment, to think through what this means, and then act on this new knowledge. The benefit of scenarios is they change mindsets and re-frame perceptions in organisations, improving strategic decision-making.

While there are several books on scenario planning which cover a range of scenario techniques, the value of this book is that it presents a detailed step-by-step guide to the “Intuitive Logics” method of scenario planning.

This book has three possible audiences.

- The first group which is very large, comprises students working on MBA and other university programs focused on business planning, who need to analyze and understand the contextual environment in which organisations operate, and how and why it may change in unanticipated directions.
- The second group comprises practitioner-scholars involved in scenario work who already know much about scenario work, and this book provides a practical foundation for the Intuitive Logics scenario development process.
- The third group are managers, leaders, professionals, and policy-makers across a broad spectrum of private and public sector organisations, who may be familiar with the topic of scenario planning but want a much deeper understanding of the topic, its conceptual framework and process, and its value in addressing specific business challenges. This book will enable them to be more aware of and prepare for, alternative futures and provide the means to challenge conventional thought.

My scenario journey

After completing a full-time MBA program at Strathclyde University Business School in 1992, I joined the Business School as a lecturer. During the MBA I undertook a scenario planning module (EIBE-Exploring the International Business Environment) developed and taught by Professor Kees van der Heijden who joined the Business School following his retirement from Shell. I spent hours talking to Kees about his experience with scenario planning, and he suggested that I join the Business School and undertake a PhD in scenario planning with him as my supervisor. I was fortunate to be offered a position as a lecturer at the Business School, and I spent the next 4 years as Kees's scenario apprentice, working with him on scenario projects in the UK, Singapore, and Barbados, teaching the MBA EIBE course and working on my PhD. Kees retired from Strathclyde and in 1996 I took over the role of EIBE 'Subject Coordinator' and was posted to Asia as Director of Strathclyde postgraduate programmes. I spent the next 25 years managing postgraduate programs in Asia (India, Malaysia, and Singapore), the Middle East (Bahrain, The UAE, Muscat) and Europe (Greece and Switzerland).

Alongside my Business School activities, I led and managed numerous scenario and strategy development projects with a wide array of public sector bodies, MNCs, SMEs and NGOs in numerous countries (Barbados, China, Finland, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, UAE, UK) in diverse sectors ranging from Airlines to Pharmaceuticals. I also worked with the World Bank in India and the World Economic Forum in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. Alongside scenario projects, I have run numerous 5-day scenario training workshops, including 45+ for Indian Railways.

In 2022 I retired from Strathclyde and following encouragement from individuals I had worked with on scenario projects and students I had taught the Strathclyde scenario course, in 2023 I decided to write this book.

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