



HOW DO YOU TRANSLATE ANALYSIS INTO ACTION?

STRATEGIC CONVERSATION WORKSHOPS
FOR GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS

DUSTING DOWN THE DOCUMENTS & DRILLING FOR THE DIAMONDS.

Valuable insights from research commissioned by companies, governments and charities more often than not gather dust on shelves, rather than inform timely and sound decision-making. The problem is then exacerbated by doing more research that has the same fate.

In an unprecedented era of geopolitical volatility and information overload, there are many barriers to cutting through the noise, understanding the implications of research for projects and business, and translating the plethora of available analyses into action.

A related problem is the tendency to skim, when the devil can be in the detail; cognitive bias or the vested interests of others can then win over evidence-based decisions. Psychologists and behavioural economists also

point to the issue of 'expert failure'. With the benefit of hindsight, most outside subject matter experts are surprisingly poor at prediction, particularly in their own areas of expertise.

While analysts specialising in particular regions, sectors or disciplines excel at developing frameworks that explain how the present situation developed, thus the current analytical trend, the very same frameworks and conventional wisdom tend to inhibit their ability to recognise how things are changing. It is difficult to discard the baseline assumptions that have served them well in the face of change.

As no-one can predict, let alone control, the future, the best we can do is objectively narrow the options and make the challenge more focused and manageable.

COLLABORATIVE THINKING. COLLECTIVE ACTION.

Our goal is to give clients an edge in their strategic and operational decision-making by ensuring that the world's best macro and micro analytical insights are translated into actionable plans, aligning key stakeholders in the process.

In contrast to conventional 'round tables', we use an innovative approach that maximises interaction between leading experts and people throughout the organisation. This not only improves their understanding, but also inspires and enables pre-emptive planning and sustainable action.

Participants discover for themselves how to extract knowledge and understanding from the subject-matter expertise provided in order to make the best decisions possible.

In the process they also learn the value and art of 'strategic conversation' to create consensus around issues and decisions, thus making their engagement more effective and impactful, while eliminating psychological biases.

Experts present relevant evidence and case studies, and at the practical level, guide the conversation about whether the organisation's internal processes and culture are fit to avert, and also absorb, inevitable future shocks. The discussion is conducted in no nonsense terms to cut to the chase, and clarify rather than confuse.

For more information, please contact workshops@beechwood.net.



Scenario analysis is often a useful means to integrate expert insights into a company's decision-making. Our practitioners have developed a 3-stage methodology which is applied in special sessions to challenge how employees evaluate current conditions and trends that they know or think they know well.

Imagining the future environment

- Brainstorm current conditions and trends that participants know, or think they know, well.
- Categorise trends considered unsustainable, unlikely to develop, or vulnerable to collapse.
- Distil 'disruptive discontinuities' (trends that could go one of several different directions) and 'wild cards' (one-off, highly disruptive events).

Bounding alternative futures

- Select the two most critical 'macro drivers'.
- Create a scenarios grid comprising four quadrants.
- Agree scenario boundaries from the one most similar to today and to the most different.

Creating scenario narratives

- Categorise into short, medium and long term.

EXPERTISE. EXPERIENCE. STRATEGY. COLLABORATION.

Beechwood and its partners frequently carry out scenario analysis engagements with clients in the private, public and non-profit sectors, bringing best practices from each to bear in the workshops. Our combined extensive global reach, grounded understanding of the world, and independence make us a trusted and valuable resource for clients, ranging from governments (examples below), charities, think tanks, international institutions and companies in banking, energy, legal, mining, pharmaceuticals, professional services, and telecommunications.

Scenario Analysis for Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management

For the League of Arab States, we provided two rounds of four-day scenario analysis workshops for diplomats and analysts on how organisations can mitigate uncertainty, and thus enhance effective preventive capabilities and crisis management. Participants developed the practical and methodological skills to carry out scenario analysis in a crisis response setting, and engaged in real world scenario building projects that examined key crises and contingencies facing the League over the next 18 months.

Future of Energy Security to 2020 and 2040

For a US government agency, we identified countries that are most likely to have an impact on US national security through their pursuit of domestic energy security. Drawing on interviews with leading experts and in-house research, we produced scenarios for the medium-term (to 2020) and long-term (to 2040) energy security picture for the selected states. The analysis included crosscutting themes that affect multiple countries, focused country case studies and specific implications for US interests.

Shared Situational Awareness

As part of a major UK government study into achieving shared situational awareness of national threats through an 'Integrated Approach', we designed and delivered a series of workshops that identified and analysed potential situations or events that would need to be addressed by the UK in the next 5 years. These included scenarios in the homeland, Kenya, Syria and Iran. Participants then evaluated the implications for defence doctrine, capability and other government practitioners to respond to such scenarios.

BEECHWOOD
INTERNATIONAL



Beechwood International is a London-based strategy consultancy that brings together disparate groups to address difficult problems. Its associates combine subject matter expertise and first-hand practical experience with a strategic perspective and a unique workshop-based collaborative capability called **TEAMWIN**.

Oxford Analytica is a renowned global analysis and advisory firm whose insights and judgements enable clients to succeed in a world where the nexus of politics and economics, state and business is critical.

