
ONLINE CHALLENGE

MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN FORESIGHT & DECISION MAKING

③ A FUTURISTBARBARA.COM PUBLICATION

FuturistBarbara.com provides online courses, programs, and lectures for mid-sized organizations on foresight, strategic decision-making, and innovation.

Our goal is to help managers develop their weak signal sensitivity, long-term thinking and productive conflict skills and tune their organization's processes to support the same skill development in others.

In the context of accelerating digitization, our organizations' competitive edge relies on the skill to envision change as early and accurately as possible. Weak signal sensitivity, long-term thinking, and productive conflict belong to the essential 21st-century competencies developed by the OECD.

Instructor Dr. Barbara van Veen has earned a Ph.D. in managerial foresight and possesses 20+ years of boardroom decision-making augmentation. She is also Harvard Business School trained in strategy and behavioral economics.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Online Challenge Foresight & Decision-Making is...

A management development program designed to build 21st-century competencies, practice skills, and show what it means to lead confidently and decide wisely.

The Challenge is especially suited for organizations wanting to increase strategic awareness and realize innovation at the same time, to help them prepare for an increasingly volatile and uncertain future.

The Problem

Most organizations aren't developing themselves as knowledge builders. That's because they focus on retention, which delivers only short-term value and requires much more effort than steady information building.

The Solution

Organizations are much more successful when they redesign decision-making as an explorative process instead of a choice only process. That allows information to flow into and enrich the organization.

How to Do it

Leaders start with a MD program to help managers become information literate: scan strategically, apply sensemaking logic, mitigate bias, and profit from the generation of multiple options to reach the best, tested decision.

Why Now?

- Technologies advance rapidly: the number of patents is growing exponentially. Odds of a disruptive technology increase.
- More and more people and organizations are connected to the Internet. Wonderful innovations can go viral and conquer the world faster than ever before.
- Information doubles every two years. Its magnitude requires new information processing skills.

Why Online?

- Online captures the power of all coworkers, not just the usual suspects. Even the busiest and most introverted can join. They can leave each other a message to read and work on when it suits them.
- Online tools cater to all learning and communication styles.
- Workers are 17% more satisfied with their workplace culture when they have access to practical online tools.

Why Your Team?

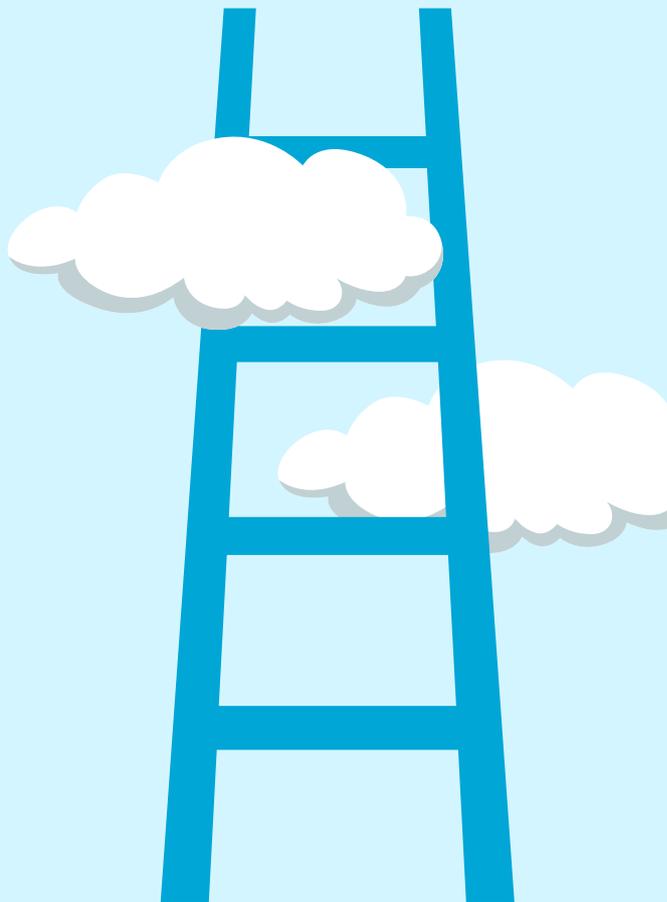
The organization that closely monitors changes at its early stages is the one that is most likely to profit from change.

If you don't, you'll eventually have to shield the organization from the detrimental effects of disruption. It's a defensive position that organizations only survive at a cost.

You've already invested in your team, so it makes sense to protect that investment, right?

ONLINE CHALLENGE

FORESIGHT & DECISION MAKING



The Online Challenge:

- Educates managers and delivers new service and revenue models at the same time
- Builds foresight, strategic decision-making, and team-oriented leadership skills.

► **Blueprint Included**

A PROVEN SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

By Barbara van Veen PhD

Bringing the management development program online and focusing on foresight and strategic decision-making has significant benefits.

Knowledge, a Fleeting Power

Knowledge is competitive power, but in the information age, it has a short shelf-life. With the shift from manufacturing to service economies, organizations in the western world depend on knowledge to survive. However, the Internet and digitization of work mean that knowledge changes as fast as technology does.

Instead of focusing on rules to retain knowledge, outperforming organizations build learning capabilities. They develop 21st-century

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competencies like strategic awareness and team-oriented leadership to turn themselves into knowledge-building machines: continuously updating and upgrading insight to find new long-lasting opportunities first.

Management Development Programs

Management development programs (MDPs) are to the learning organization what blood circulation is to a living being. It's the system that connects, nourishes, and renews knowledge so that the organization can function and grow.

Benefits of MDPs

MDPs are a proven successful method to increase the level of knowledge in the organization, build competency, ready managers for leadership roles, manage uncertainties, boost morale, innovation, better decision-making, retention of high potentials, increase diversity tolerance, updating technological insights, and makes leaders.

Three things bring out the best in MDP's:

1. Focus on foresight and strategic decision-making;
2. Bringing the program online;
3. Shaping it as a challenge.

Focus on Foresight and Decision-Making

Adults learn best when they can see the relevance of the learning, apply it to their acute learning goals, and practice.

So turning managers into information builders is best done by practicing real-world tough decisions. Preferably, your decisions. And that's why we're focusing on working on the future of the organization. From practicing foresight, developing insight, generation valid alternatives, evaluation with the longevity of the organization in mind, to testing ideas, the entire decision-making process is study material.

The role of Foresight

Foresight always is an amazing force in bringing people from all levels and backgrounds together. Although the future may be scary, it's also a level playing field because nobody really knows

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HOW DOES THE CHALLENGE WORK?

Its format and why it works

The Online Challenge is based on more than a decade of introducing and facilitating online collaboration using all kinds of tools.

My first actual Online Challenge took place in 2010, and many have followed since.

Its structure is based on the principles of adult learning and enriched by innovation managers, feedback trainers and first and foremost:

all previous participants.

Through the framework of exercises and rich storytelling content, managers take on an exciting and amazing journey into the future. They'll learn new skills and develop an actionable vision that infuses every mind in your company. They'll make critical thinking a habit, taking initiative the norm, and reap tested new business concepts, all in one project.

The challenge is designed to let managers demonstrate a willingness to participate, show interest by seeking data and actively building on each others' best skills, and so internalize an appreciation for the future ready company.

CHALLENGE RESULTS

Building new leaders

Competencies

Participants will have fortified:

- Strategic awareness
- Context-awareness
- Organizational sensitivity
- Team-oriented leadership

Skills

Participants will have practiced:

- Problem scoping
- Managing uncertainty
- Scanning 2.0
- Sensemaking
- Productive conflict
- Qualified evaluation
- Networking skills

Tasks

Participants will be able to:

- Apply trend analysis, innovation methods, and rapid prototyping techniques.
- Construct a concept of the possible business futures from multiple sources into an integrated, meaningful, and actionable vision.
- Demonstrate a readiness to take action by gathering data, sharing insights, and other actions to implement innovation.
- Create new tasks or objectives incorporating learnings.
- Judge innovated offerings on feasibility using corporate criteria, substantiated by real life tests.

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how things will turn out. Anything and everything is possible, so it's exciting, and there is no limit on creativity and innovation. But, in my experience, nothing propels teams forward like foresight done well.

The Role of Decision-Making

Instead of improving the final choice, working on the decision process improves decisions in many more ways. For example, better information, better sensemaking logic, and bias reduction happen in the stages before the final choice but significantly influence decision quality.



The online challenge is fast, fun, and effective, and has managers explore and shape their organization's future without getting stuck in endless brainstorms, unfocused meeting, and impossible ideas,

Bringing the Program Online

Even when online collaboration is tough on spontaneous interaction, personal asides, and non-verbal communication, doing an MDP online has many benefits.

Online working has the power to solve problems as time pressure, distance, and communication problems.

- An online MDP means that its information is available 24/7. So when you've got time, you can put in the work.
- New teams can get to know each other in tough situations even when they're miles apart.
- Online tools give the participant the freedom to use the learning and working styles they love best: any work and communication style can flourish.

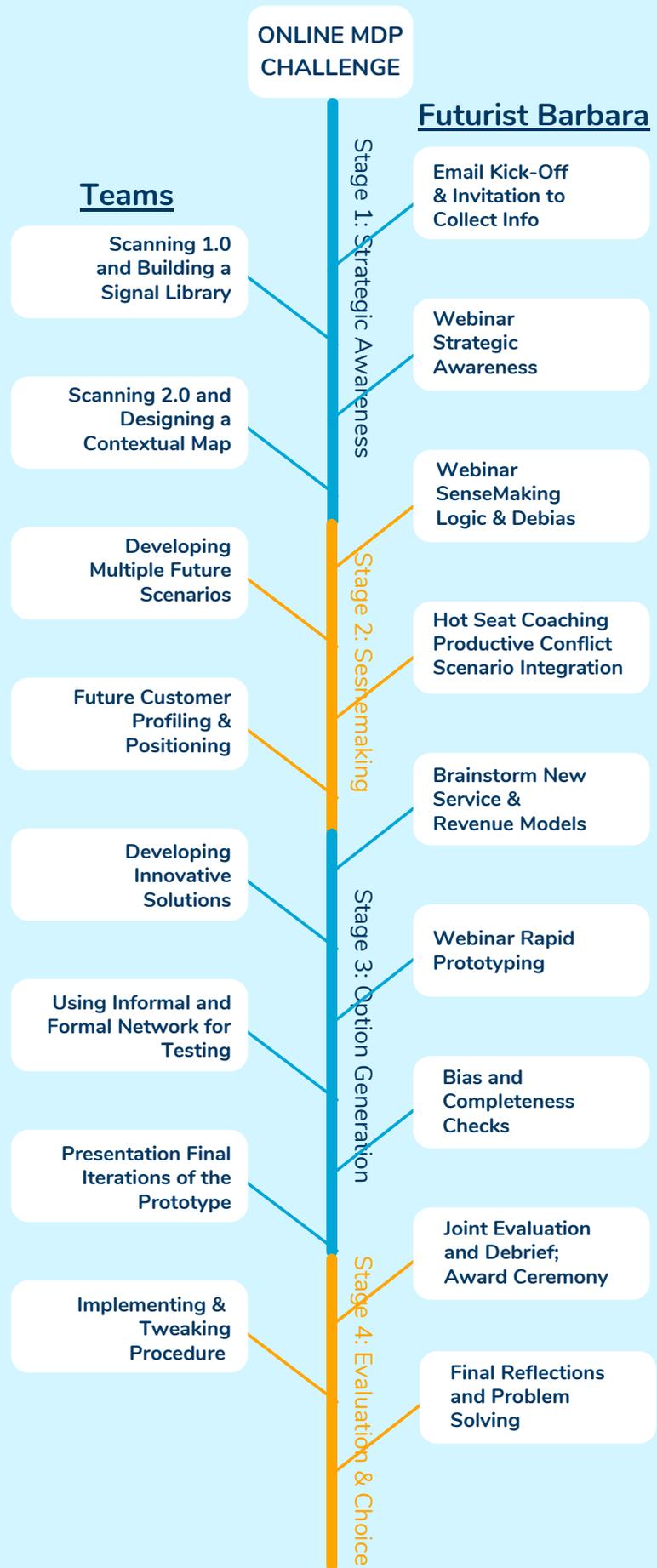
So: light-weight but maximal effect.

Turning an MDP into a Challenge

Just providing assignments, tools, time, and opportunity isn't enough to bring out the best in new teams. A playful way to learn new approaches and to turn these into new habits is just the thing that brings teams from good to great. And a challenge has you practicing new skills daily, which is habit-forming, like it or not :)

A challenge has a fishbowl effect: the idea that others notice your daily efforts or lack thereof keeps you at it because YOU don't want to lose face—inner motivation. There is nothing stronger to get you to function at a higher level and higher speed. Isn't that what changing environments require?

- The online Challenge starts with a kick-off email explaining the reasons for the Challenge, its goals, and the participants' learnings. It also contains links to the introduction webinar and the online environment. Finally, there's a link to a video explaining the first task: to scan for changes in the organizational environment.
- During the introduction webinar, I will explain the Challenge's structure, followed by the first lecture. Participants can ask questions in the chat and by raising their digital hand. At the end of the webinar, participants know how to upgrade their scanning, manage and store scanning results.
- Afterward, I will create a Q&A document and post it in the online environment for later reference. Meanwhile, the teams do another round of scanning and create a map from the scanning results.
- In the following live online meeting, the teams will present their maps and integrate findings into a shared vision on change. I will augment the maps with my expertise and explain the next assignment.
- In between online meetings, I track the progress of teams and individuals in the online environment. I take note of behaviors to help build competencies like strategic awareness and team-oriented leadership. I also clarify any questions that turn up during skill practice and provide background information on tasks.
- Teams have to work through four decision-making stages. I introduce a decision stage with a briefing and Q&A. Then, the teams go to work, followed by feedback, another round of work, and finished with a debrief. When all teams have completed four stages, I will host a closing webinar. Teams will present their proposals, and top management will select one or more winners.
- Some teams will keep on working to implement their proposal. Other teams and participants will suggest changes to procedures to integrate learnings from the Challenge in the organization's way of working. All teams will present their work to their colleagues by creating a report for the organization's Intranet.
- Three months later, I will host the final meeting in the Challenge to reflect on learnings and results. We will also discuss any issues that the teams and participants have encountered since the closing webinar.



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