

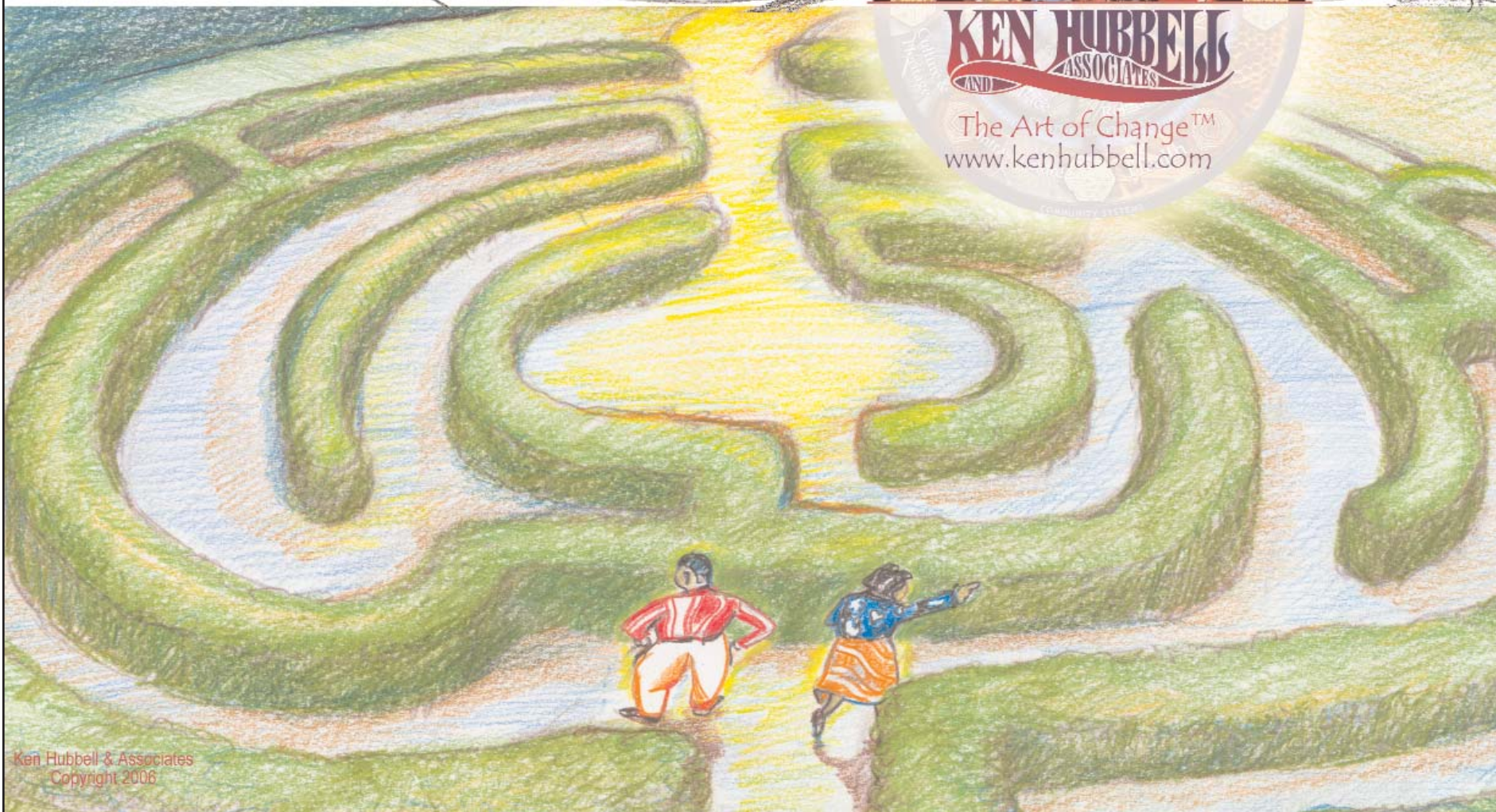
2006

Navigating the Future: How to Develop a Roadmap for your Organization



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ASSOCIATES

The Art of Change™
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People shape the future.

This guide will help you start that process for your organization.

A vibrant, abstract illustration of a maze. The maze is composed of thick, rounded walls in shades of green and yellow, set against a background of blue and purple clouds. Several small figures of people are scattered throughout the maze, walking along the paths. In the upper right corner, a bright rainbow arches across the sky. The overall style is expressive and artistic, using a variety of colors and textures to create a sense of depth and complexity.

We use a creative strategic planning process to design a *Roadmap* for organizations that is built around several possible future scenarios.

Developing a set of stories about the future requires deep hindsight about the past and evokes great foresight about the future. At Ken Hubbell and Associates, we use a photographic term—*Depth of Field*—to describe this process. Depth of field describes a “plane of critical focus,” which can start with extreme close-up focus and extend deep into the distance. Our approach to strategic and creative thinking for organizations generates new clarity about the present circumstances and events and the deeper patterns and unseen architecture of the distant future.

Leading Your Organization into the Future

As you lead your organization into the future, wouldn't you like to know where you are going?

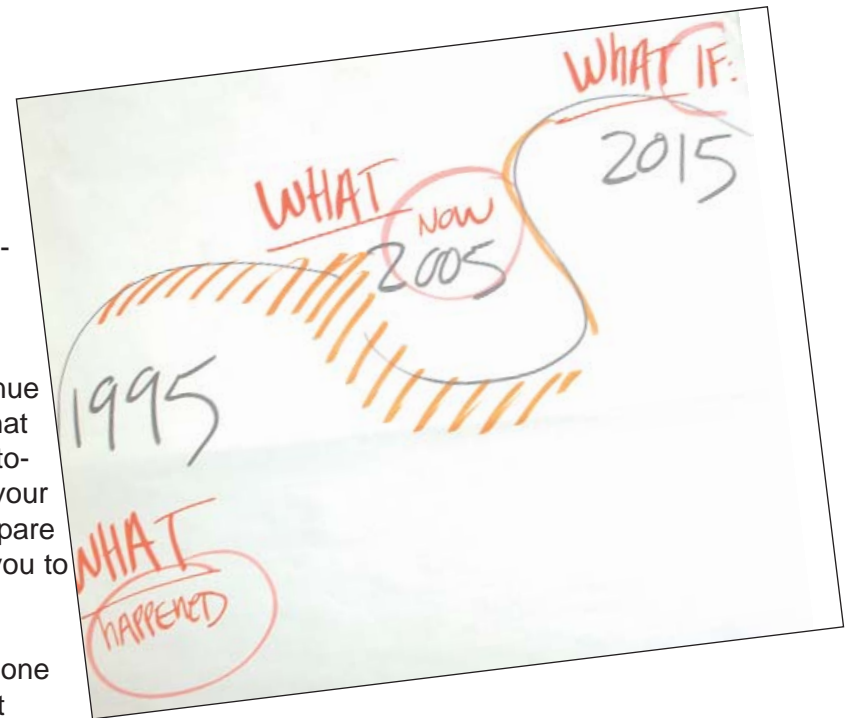
You realize it is a mistake to assume the future will look like the past. You don't want to be caught unprepared. You can forecast and predict, but you know that the future is uncertain and unknowable. The current business environment is punctuated by rapid changes. Linear planning can only take you so far.

Instead of planning for a single future, image the possibilities. As you embark on your journey, bring with you a roadmap of multiple futures.

Developing a *Roadmap* of Possible Futures

Developing stories about different futures can catalyze new levels of strategic thought and conversation within your organization. *Roadmapping*, like other forms of scenario planning, is an "outside-in" process, usually beginning with research about national or global events (social, environmental, economic, technological, and political) that may be predetermined to continue into the future. The process enables you to identify the key uncertainties that your firm and other stakeholders will confront in the future. After creating stories about the future, your team must deeply examine the implications for your organization. Recognizing the implications of each story allows you to prepare for all possible futures. Rehearsing multiple futures makes it possible for you to respond quickly and strategically no matter what happens.

The process is highly creative, informal, and intuitive. It works best when done by a group with broadly diverse experiences and points of view. The secret ingredients are the hidden ideas and perceptions about opportunities, strategies, or dangers that people in the organization carry around inside their heads but that don't get into most strategic planning.



Will This Help My Organization?

Developing a *Roadmap* of Possible Futures will help your organization if...

- * You are dealing with a strategic issue and the solution is unclear.
- * The future success of your organization, products, services or programs is affected by forces outside of your immediate control.
- * You are working in an uncertain environment.

Below is a graphic diagram of a full strategic planning process that is shaped by scenarios and strategic conversations about multiple futures.

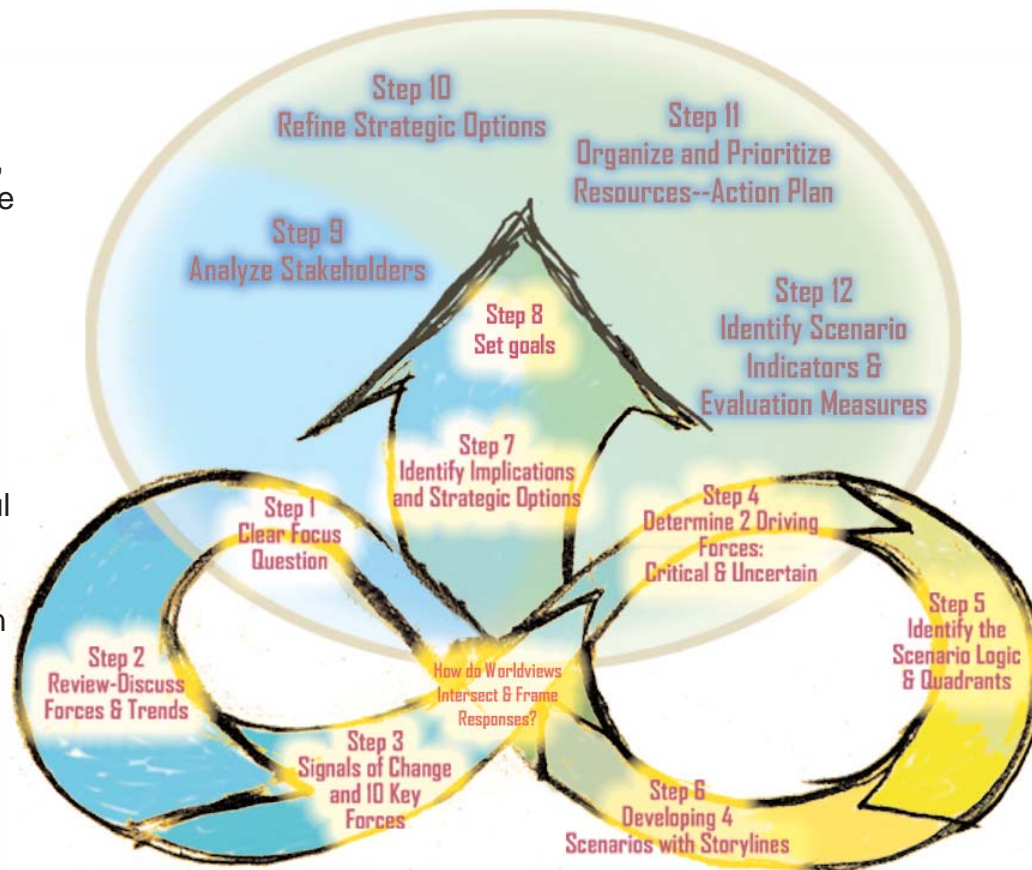
Most groups use a series of strategic conversations and short retreats to work through an appropriate set of these key steps. It is critical to clarify your key questions, uncertainties and trends that will likely impact your “world.”

The power of this kind of exercise is not the finding of a single right answer, but unlocking the possibilities the future may bring, then creating the most durable strategies that can hold up in any future.

On the next pages, we included examples of guiding questions to help you think about forces, trends, and signals or undercurrents that are useful in moving through the early steps.

Be sure to frame your “future” question at least 5-10 years into the future, and tie your focus question to your organization’s business environment. For example, if you’re operating in the health sector, or in rural places, make sure your questions will “open up” futures that touch on your environment.

Alternative Strategic Planning Process "Rehearse the Future" through Scenarios & Follow with Action Planning



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DISTANT FUTURE

What will happen and what should we do?

NEXT DECADE

What might change?

Where are the biggest uncertainties?
What are the kinds of events that seem
unimaginable through today's lenses?

How will people and organizations live in this "world?"
What kind of legacy do we want to have?

PRESENT

STRATEGIC
PLANNING
THAT
ANTICIPATES
OUR FUTURES

What changes are unfolding?
What trends are continuing?

RECENT PAST

What are the key events that happened in the last five years?
What forces may persist and how will they influence the future?
What are the most important trends?

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Outside-In and Inside-Out Strategic Thinking and Planning

To create new ideas and opportunities, groups need to find ways to reframe their strategic planning: instead of just the traditional journey from the inside of your organization outward through SWOT assessments which assume that the future will closely mirror the present, start your planning from the outside by the considering forces that are way beyond your control since these will produce the surprises and opportunities--and unforeseen crises. Then move your strategic thinking *inside* to assess the implications of these key uncertainties on your current strategies, core business practices, organizational capacity and culture. This begins to open up your thinking and provides an introduction to considering that there may actually be multiple futures rather than just a single, "hoped for" future.



adapted from work by Global Business Network

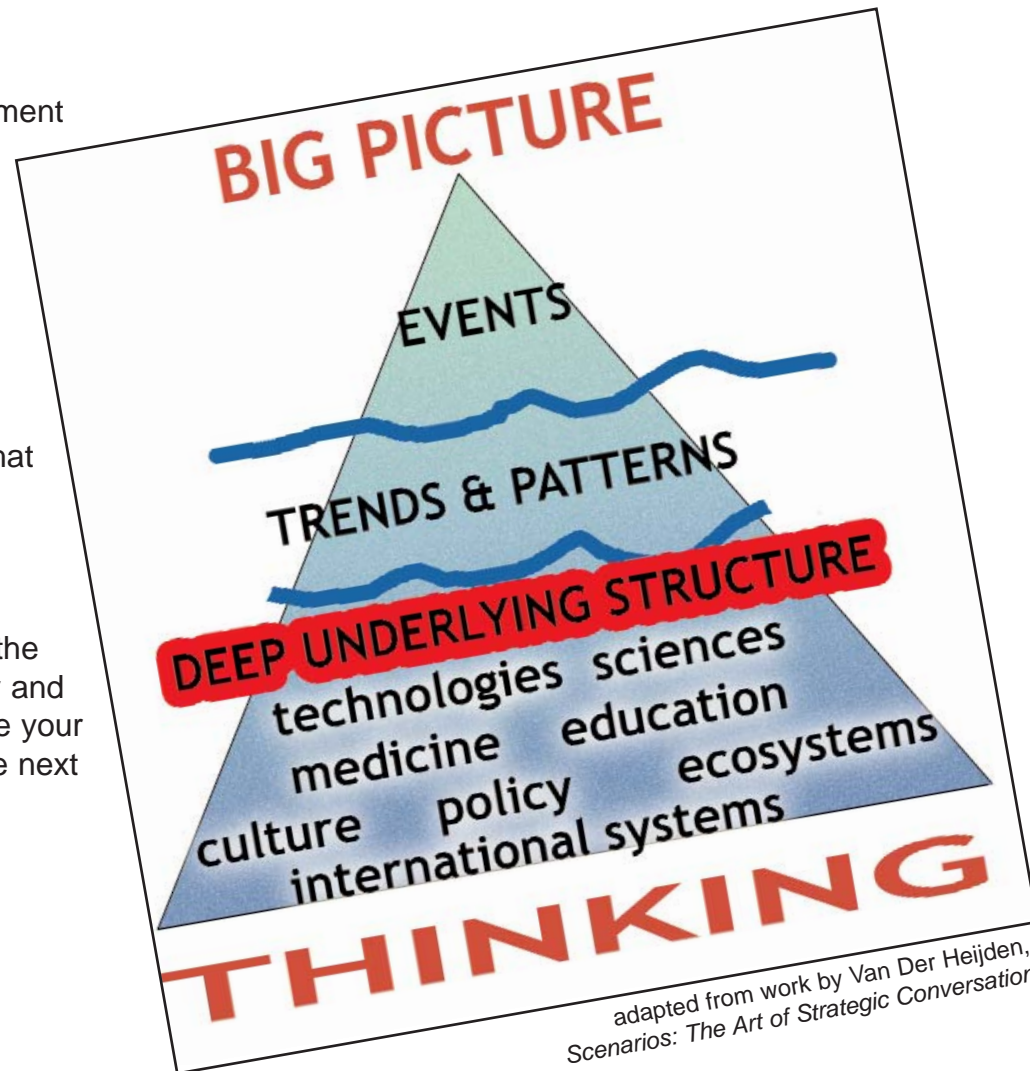
Looking deeper into your environment

The most successful strategic conversations occur when your group drills down below the surface confusion of today's busy events to get to the bottom of things. When you look deeper, you can start discerning the most powerful forces that are illuminating the structure of the present--and may continue to guide the future as the forces move beneath our every-day radar.

Once you've developed a long list of key events, and identified some emerging trends, look at these clusters and go deeper:

- * What is driving a particular situation?
- * What is happening now in the environment that matters, or could matter in the future?
- * What are the other ways of looking at the situation?
- * What are the implicit assumptions in our current thinking that we need to question?
- * What are we not looking at that we should be? What do we need to see that is now invisible and that no one else sees?

At the end of this exploration and discovery process, your team must make sense out of the new insights. This requires disciplined inquiry and imagination. It also works best if you structure your forces along a continuum like the table on the next page.



Forces and Undercurrents that are in Motion for the Decade 2005–2015

How Our Responses to Predetermined Forces Fluctuate and Help Shape the Future

After you develop and discuss continuing trends and powerful forces that may continue in the years to come, it may help you to consider that all these forces are in motion along a continuum. This guide will help you consider how different variables and undercurrents may evolve--and collide to push the future onto particular roads. How might any of these uncertain undercurrents affect your organization?

This list includes several of the key forces that Americans will probably confront in the next decade.

Powerful Forces (the force is in motion-- either limited or progressive)	Both this....might happen (indicators of the limited or resistant stage of the force)	And this....might also happen (indicators of the optimal or progressive stage of the force)
Changes in social attitudes and values and cultural tensions	Secular, religious, economic, and racial separateness and polarization; in some areas a sense of malaise or suspicion. Distrust of foreigners.	Growing displays of community, sharing, inclusivity and tolerance; a widespread appreciation for wellness, volunteerism. Older workers. Growth of nonprofits.
Reaction to continuous, advancing technology	Fears of being left behind in the digital future, students and workers slipping behind the marketplace for skilled employees, sensory overload, computing and data insecurity.	Unlimited choice and customized learning, shopping; proliferation of instant online information and collaboration; gradual rebirth of schools; economic volatility and competition.
Level of US engagement and role in the world	Fiscal constraints, mounting deficits; a continued tension around global "outsourcing"; priority on global terrorism and homeland security; US as "mighty" foe and reluctant partner on global stage.	Ripples of democratic "movements" in more countries, US military and aid diplomacy around war on terror; huge investments in world health and disease, immigration and space exploration grows.
Levels of personal, societal security in a world framed by terrorism and uncertainty	Abuse of private information, "identify theft" increases and persistent computer virus scares, "Big Brother" government surveillance, travel and commerce delays tied to Homeland security. Domestic and diplomatic fears over terror cells and defiant rogue countries. Continued terror "events" quicken unease across Middle East and South East Asia.	Stronger international collaboration reduces perceived power of terrorist leadership and networks but skirmishes and suicide bombings common; G8 networks press for "checkmate" with nuclear states; new roles for NATO and UN.
Effects of an increasing globalized economy	More conflicts over outsourcing, world trade laws; continued manufacturing shifts overseas with domestic workforce re-alignment. Knowledge workers at a premium; information chaos and anxiety over terror, disease. Media conglomerates squeeze smaller competitors.	Maximum choice in products and foods and experiences; growth of entrepreneurs; micro-mobile gear; consolidation across industries; dominant world brands; increased pressures on travel, data, financial systems; concentrated power/wealth. U S government shifts policies to conform to some International bodies.
Response to pressures on the natural world and the environment	Sprawl and urbanization continue; dangerous reliance on petroleum; pressures for more oil exploration, drilling with high prices.	More acceptance of eco-friendly packaging, tourism, architecture and agriculture; new benefits from recycling and alternative fuels.
Impact and response to demographic changes	Domestic struggles around the social safety net, immigration friction and border insecurity; hints of generational "divides", "have vs. have-not" mentality and growing Hispanic population.	New perspectives on working retirement and civil society as Boom generation starts "retirement"; increasing immigration levels-and population expansion, especially in urban centers.

**This document is
an introduction to
the KHA Roadmap.
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