



Imagining Extraordinary Change In a Traditional Profession

August 20, 2006

Presented by:

Sharon Hunt, CAE, Executive Director, Southern Association of Orthodontists

Marsha Rhea, CAE, Senior Futurist, Institute for Alternative Futures



Welcome and Orientation

Imagining Extraordinary Change in a Traditional Profession

The Southern Association of Orthodontists realized the profession needed to stop being blind-sided by change and use foresight to prepare its members to adapt. Using a futures learning process, SAO invested in a serious effort at scanning, forecasting, scenario planning, visioning and goal-setting from spring 2005 to spring 2006. What began as a regional effort expanded into a national initiative as the SAO leaders astutely drew others into this collaboration. This will be a very practical look at how a regional organization used futures tools to help its profession break out of their past and create an openness to new thinking and possibilities.

Our three learning objectives for this session:

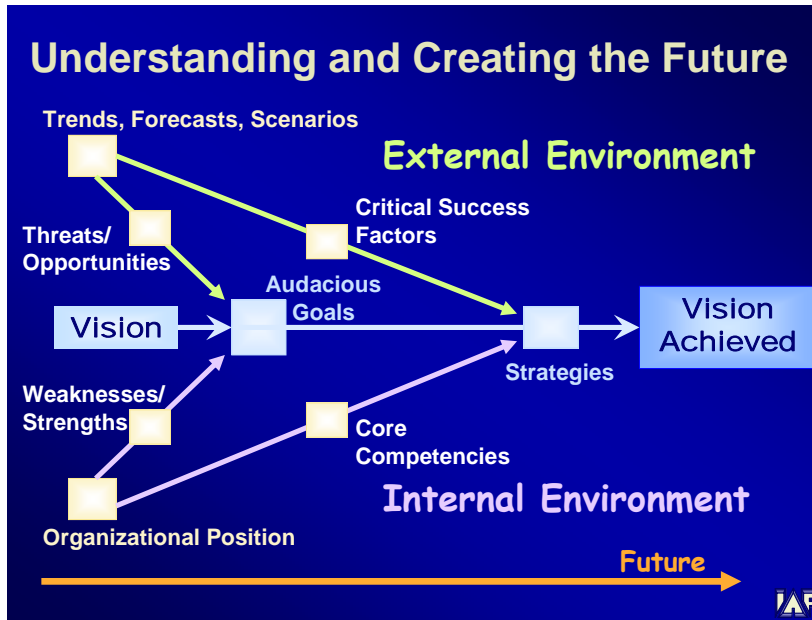
- Explore how to use futures tools in leading tradition-bound professions and industries through change
- Understand the psychology and strategy of acting as a change agent within state, regional and national organizational structures
- Acknowledge and manage the realities of current priorities while opening up to future possibilities



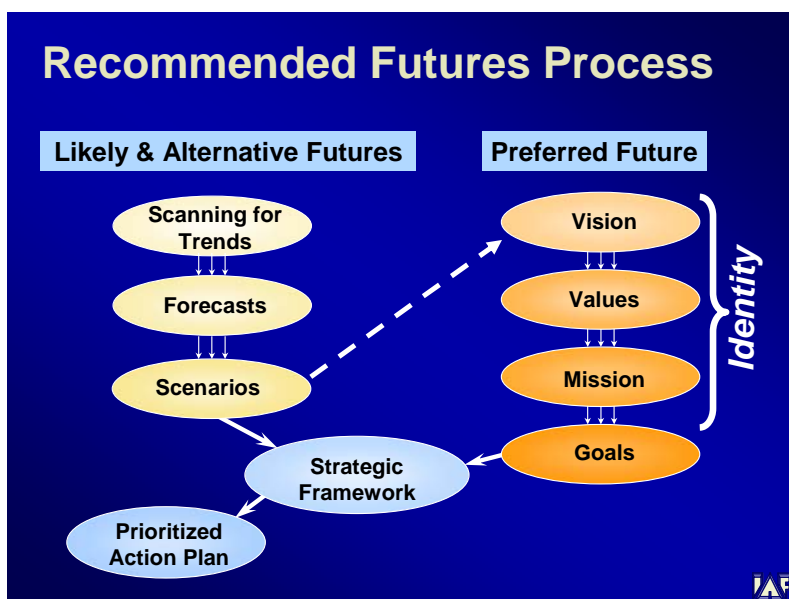
***The Future Is In
Your Hands!***

An Overview of the Futures Process and Methods

Futures processes and methods involve a systematic, inquisitive and creative examination of how the world is changing and a courageous and determined effort to achieve a preferred future. The diagram below illustrates the basic steps an organization should consider in strategic planning.



Organizations quite often limit their examination of the future to likely and alternative futures. A more powerful approach to planning is to couple this analytical examination with a heart-felt examination of where the organization would like to go. This diagram illustrates a recommended process.



Environmental Scanning

Environmental scanning looks at a broad range of ideas in your external and internal operating environment. This research can be found in Web and print literature, various reports, and through expert interviews. The process of environmental scanning typically includes:

- Iterative process of questioning the official future
- Informed through collaborative learning and analysis
- Directed at areas of concern
- Literature and web scan
- Interviews
 - Internal
 - External
- Focus groups & surveys
- Other futures reports

It is a systematic process that investigates all aspects of your future:

- **External Environment** – STEEPV—Consider these areas:
 - Social
 - Technological
 - Economic
 - Environmental
 - Political
 - Values

- **Operating Environment** - the world of your organization

Here's a series of questions that have proven to be a very simple way of identifying what matters most:

1. **Who are we becoming?** *As individuals and society*
2. **What will our world be like?** *In living and working environments*
3. **How will we learn?** *Adapting to changing conditions*
4. **What capabilities will we have?** *Science and technology*
5. **What will organizations become?** *Ways of working together*
6. **What values will guide us?** *Beliefs and attitudes*

Some Basic Futures Terms Defined

- **Trends** are patterns of change over time in some factor of interest to the observer.
- **Key Drivers** are trends/developments that could change the future of the field or organization.
- **Strategic Issues** are sets of drivers that interact with one another to create critical organizational challenges.
- **Forecasts** are projections of what could happen to a key driver at some future time; educated guesses based on analyzing the interplay of related trends, issues and developments; useful devices to bound the possibilities for what to anticipate in the future.

Extrapolative and Provocative Forecasts

Extrapolative forecasts are logical projections of major forces that are already changing the profession. Taken individually, these forecasts may not be that surprising. Their storyline is easy to follow, and people agree with the general direction of the basic plot even when they may differ with specific developments. When these extrapolative forecasts are studied together, they can create a picture of a very different profession.

Example of An Extrapolative Forecast

Evidence-based Orthodontics: Consumers who have learned to choose their healthcare providers based on evidence of effectiveness, value and safety to help control costs will want to select their orthodontists on the same basis. Electronic dental records and digital images will create a gold mine of data for academics to evaluate what orthodontic treatments get better results for different patients and their conditions.

Provocative forecasts are at the edge of disruptive innovation. They are plausible, but people can easily list the reasons why these forecasts are less probable. Since they represent the greatest amount of change, they evoke very different images of what the future of the profession might be.

Example of a Provocative Forecast

No Braces Alternative: Appliance technology changes radically, removing traditional braces as the most common method of orthodontic treatment. Independent wires and mouth-guards are the most common form of treatment. Made of smart materials, these appliance technologies are less visible and can detect changes in alignment and adjust themselves with more force than traditional braces.

Scenarios Are Stories That Help Us Learn about the Future and Ourselves

When people have difficulty imagining how very different the future could be, scenarios are an excellent way to help people explore alternative futures. These stories facilitate organizational learning and reveal mental models and values. They stimulate strategic conversation, and inspire organizations to think and act in new ways.

In the 2016 scenarios for orthodontics, IAF explored the expected, feared and preferred future through four archetypal characters. One character lives in an expected future. Another character is thriving in what would be a feared future for most traditional orthodontists. A third character is creating a preferred future through a different values system. The fourth character is thriving in a preferred future where significant progress in science and technology transforms the profession.

Snapshots of the 2016 Future Outcomes of Orthodontics Scenarios

Orthodontic Profession Evolves in Familiar Ways explores a future where sophisticated technology makes it easy to tie practices into consortia to share financial and technology resources to create a strong brand for quality care. The growing demand for services in urban areas is met, while creative solutions are needed to provide affordable care to rural and poor communities. Orthodontists are educated in a variety of schools that offer different approaches to overcoming limited resources for faculty. Orthodontists are accepting evidence-based orthodontics as a way to help their patients understand different approaches to their treatment.

Smile Specialists Reshape Expectations and Markets examines changes in the external environment that give rise to an alternative business model. Large corporate practices are gaining market share in growing suburban areas and adult markets. With limited evidence to justify the medical value of orthodontic treatments, the public is attracted to what they can understand, the desirability of a beautiful smile. Corporations build global relationships to get efficiencies of scale. They can meet changing patient expectations, are quick to adopt new technologies, and stand ready to exploit evidence that is redefining treatment practices.

Orthodontic Caregivers Embrace Holistic Care explores orthodontics in a world that is coming to value holistic medicine and interdisciplinary collaboration. Ethical solutions to bring quality care to poor and remote areas demonstrate the value of orthodontic care in uniting psychological and physical health. The boundaries within the professional disciplines fade in importance as caregivers focus on patient health. Evidence emerges that good patient outcomes depend on holistic treatment practices. People are beginning to embrace new models of education and lifelong learning that take classrooms into the world to create understanding and meaning. Orthodontists are joining their colleagues in a community of care that respects everyone's contributions to health.

Dentofacial Experts Transform Orthodontic Knowledge probes what might be possible through advances in science and technology. This is a future where orthodontic expertise is better defined and highly respected by society. Orthodontic research is entering an age of excitement. This draws academia and practitioners closer together as they work to stay abreast of new developments. Collaborative learning technologies are becoming quite robust in supporting continuous learning. Experienced practitioners have joined a large corps of adjunct professors. Orthodontists move up the value chain emphasizing evidence-based orthodontics research and board certification as evidence of their expertise.

Discovering Your Vision

A vision inspires people to achieve more than they ever thought possible; it expresses deep purposefulness, and it is an idealistic but pragmatic tool. A shared vision is a real force that emerges from people's hearts, creates a sense that they can push at the boundaries of change, and articulates a daring adventure they can agree to undertake together. The 2016 Vision for the Orthodontic Profession, below, emerged from the stories the orthodontists told about their best days in the profession and reflections on what they wanted their legacy to be.

2016 Vision for the Orthodontic Profession

We bring smiles into the lives we touch through caring, ethical and expert treatment decisions. We are continually raising the bar through training and lifelong education, research and advances in treatment practices. We honor and reward the educators who are finding new ways to prepare the next generation to sustain the values and quality of the specialty. We attract the best and expect that they accept this obligation to serve patients and the specialty.

The public respects and turns to orthodontic specialists for their contribution to appearance, health and well being. Our patients are our partners in creating and sustaining quality outcomes for a lifetime. We are creating opportunities to make orthodontic care available to anyone who needs and seeks it.

We are called as leaders: as mentors for our young patients, as responsible citizens, and as advocates for our specialty in our communities, nation and the world.

A Strategic Framework Flows from Vision to Audacious Goals and Strategies

Organizations set their direction for a preferred future through vision, audacious goals and strategies. These elements become the strategic framework that guides more detailed action or annual planning. Audacious goals represent a stretch for the organization, and should require a significant and sustained effort over many years. The orthodontists identified four audacious goals as their highest priorities for the next 10 years.

After identifying each goal, work groups defined intermediate goals that could focus efforts over the next five years, identified the strategies that would help them achieve this goal, and then defined what evidence of a successful outcome would be.

An Example of an Audacious Goal, Intermediate Goals, Strategy and Outcomes

III. Access to Care

The AAO will have taken back the leadership role in providing access to orthodontic care to anyone who needs and seeks it.

To achieve this 2016 audacious goal, the specialty has these intermediate goals:

1. Expand the Virginia Brown Foundation/Smiles Change Lives Program nationwide by encouraging the AAO to provide the mechanism to constituent and components to stimulate participation in the program.
 - In the next 18 to 24 months, we will create constituent and component chairpersons to promote participation in the Virginia Brown Foundation/Smiles Change Lives Program;
 - Place information on the AAO, constituent and component websites about the program.
2. AAO will provide leadership and cooperate with the American Dental Association to create opportunities to offer some level of orthodontic care to underserved areas.
 - In the next 18 to 24 months, AAO will be encouraged to establish a liaison with the ADA to explore this opportunity.
 - AAO will continue to support the "Give Kids a Smile" program.

Our Strategy: Educate the AAO membership and the general public about access to care.

Evidence of a Successful Outcome: Our hope is that access to care will be a privately funded humanitarian effort.

Reflections on Lessons Learned from This Association Futures Project

1. Have the right leadership team in place--this will be a multiyear project covering several presidential terms.
2. When that window of opportunity opens to look seriously at the future, don't hesitate and don't wait for someone else to be the leader who shapes your future.
3. The future respects no boundaries. Open up your process to all the people and organizations you will need to help you create a preferred future.
4. Begin with the end in mind. Know what you want to accomplish and never lose sight of that outcome.
5. Expect to spend many hours learning about the future and engaging in the processes. A consulting futurist can be a great guide, but only your members can interpret what these alternative futures will mean to the profession—or decide what they want their preferred future to be.
6. Plan to spend money. Don't be pennywise and pound foolish. This is a serious investment in the future effectiveness of your association.
7. Make sure the end result is antitrust-proof. When you talk about your preferred future, you cannot do or say anything that might be construed as a restraint of trade.
8. Thinking about the future is a safe and effective way to open up controversial topics and clarify values for the profession. The future puts things in the right context for smarter decision making.
9. This is a continuous process that is always renewed and revisited in other follow-on programs and activities. A great futures project keeps on giving to the profession.

For More Information on the Future of Orthodontics

To view the forecasts report, scenarios or the draft strategic framework on the future of orthodontics from this futures project, contact Sharon Hunt, Southern Association of Orthodontists, sharhunt@bellsouth.net

For more information about futures tools and methodologies, other examples of how organizations are using futures, and other futures research reports, visit the Institute for Alternative Futures website at www.altfutures.com or contact Marsha Rhea, mrhea@altfutures.com

Thank you

For joining us in this learning lab. When you can reach out to great people and great ideas, a preferred future truly is possible.