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Forward Perspectives



Delving Deeper Into Type for Strategy Teams

by Eric Meade

Many internal strategy teams come up with bold, new strategies to pursue, only to encounter unexpected obstacles – or downright apathy – when they try to communicate those strategies to others in the organization. IAF vice president Eric Meade recently showed the strategy team of a major financial services company how this challenge can often be overcome by understanding personality type differences across the organization. What is true for this team is true for any team that wants to build support for a new strategy.

Meade used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a framework for understanding how cognitive processes differ among 16 personality “types,” each of which is indicated by a different four-letter code – INTJ, ENFP, ISFJ, etc. Type describes how different people prefer to take in new information and then make judgments about it. Many people are familiar with the MBTI, but most go no further than getting their four-letter code and reading a description of their own type.

However, Meade knows how to take the MBTI much further. The four-letter type is just the beginning. The real value is in understanding the cognitive dynamics that these letters represent. For example, using type can help a team communicate a new strategy to different audiences in terms they can understand. In addressing cultural resistance, type can help anticipate the likely reactions of different operational centers. Further, in approaching key decision-makers, type can provide tactical guidance on how to maximize the likelihood that the recommendations will be accepted.

To understand this value proposition, it helps to know more about the roots of the MBTI. The instrument is based on the work of Carl Jung, who described four functions:

- Sensing – perception of concrete specifics
- Intuition – perception of abstract concepts
- Thinking – objective judgment based on logic
- Feeling – subjective judgment based on values and beliefs

Everyone has all four functions. In each pair (sensing/intuition and thinking/feeling), one function is “introverted” (directed toward the inner world of thoughts and ideas) and the other is

“extroverted” (directed toward the outer world of people and action). Also, one function in each pair is preferred, just as everyone prefers to sign their name with either their left or right hand. Just as the non-preferred hand often writes poorly, a non-preferred function may be underdeveloped and immature.

This deeper dive into type dynamics suggests that everyone lives in one of two different worlds. For each type, one of the perceiving functions (sensing or intuition) is introverted, while the other is extraverted. The one that is extraverted is the function with which they perceive the outer world, where the rest of us live. Some people (whose extraverted perception is through sensing) live in a world of facts and data. Other people (whose extraverted perception is through intuition) live in a world of concepts and theories. These are two very different worlds.

This is completely separate from which of these functions a person *prefers*. For example, imagine you are selling a new strategy to your CEO, who reports out as INTJ. While the INTJ preference is for intuition, this intuition is introverted – that is, directed toward the person’s inner world of dreams, reflections, and insights. Their sensing function, which is their least preferred function, is what they use to perceive the outer world – through concrete details and specifics. This means that this person lives in an outer world of facts and data, but their perception of that world may be highly stressful or even ineffective.

To sell this CEO on a new strategy, the team must present its recommendations in terms of facts and data that the CEO can perceive – perhaps with some difficulty – using the sensing function. However, the facts and data are not enough. The CEO will need to reflect on his or her own, allowing intuition to find the pattern behind the facts and figures, which may then emerge as insight. It is this insight that the CEO will trust – not the facts and data that the team presented.

Just as this understanding helps in structuring communications to an individual, it can also help structure communications to other departments. Different parts of an organization attract different types, so a department may have a modal type that influences its behavior as a group. Thus, an understanding of type can point to specific tactics that can improve the likelihood that each department will go along with the new strategy. In some cases, the strategy should be presented in person, while in other cases it should be sent in a memo. In some cases, a concept paper or a vision may be most appropriate, while in other cases a spreadsheet might work better.

This deeper dive into type helped the strategy team at the financial services company appreciate the significance of these differences to how they communicated new strategies within the organization. One client said that she had sat through at least 20 MBTI workshops during the course of her career and none of them had come anywhere close to Meade’s presentation. Others expressed an eagerness to get back to their offices to make changes to the deliverables they were submitting to senior leadership later that day. It was clear to this team that understanding type was a key to turning their strategies into concrete results for the organization.

For more information on the MBTI and its value for strategy teams, please contact Eric Meade at emeade@altfutures.org.

News & Events



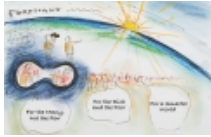
IAF Releases Vulnerability 2030 Scenarios and Toolkit

What will vulnerability in America look like in 2030? How will key economic, policy, social, environmental and other factors evolve over the next two decades? How might the internet and wireless communications affect and be used by vulnerable populations? These were just a few of the questions addressed by IAF’s year-long project on the future of vulnerability in the U.S. The project was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Vulnerable Populations Portfolio, which addresses the critical connections between health and social circumstances.

The scenarios include an “expectable” future where the government is constrained by debt and the ranks of the vulnerable grow; a challenging future with a double-dip recession and widening disparities in health, wealth and opportunity; an equitable future where government leads efforts to create a society and economy that works for all; and a community-focused future where local efforts emphasize sustainability and enable nearly everyone to achieve his or her full potential. The scenarios highlight implications and questions for how those working in philanthropy—and across all sectors—can plan for future conditions to improve the outlook for vulnerable populations

IAF and RWJF are making these scenarios accessible in several forms. First, the scenario report is

available on the RWJF and IAF websites. (See www.altfutures.org/vulnerability2030.) Second, IAF and RWJF are holding two webinars to stimulate a broader discussion of changes that will influence the future for the most vulnerable Americans. The first webinar was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2011 and the second webinar will be held at 2:00 p.m. EST and Tuesday, April 12 at 1:30 p.m. EST. (You can register for the webinar [here](#).) Third, IAF has created a video toolkit that allows nonprofit organizations across the country to experience the scenarios and to explore the implications for their own strategies and operations. The toolkit includes an agenda and worksheets for a one-day scenario workshop, videos to orient participants to the scenario process, and a short video describing how each scenario plays out over the next two decades. The toolkit is available at www.altfutures.org/vulnerability2030.



IAF Competition Offers Prizes for Pro-Poor Scenarios

The Institute for Alternative Futures, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, has developed a "Pro-Poor Scenario Toolkit" and is now holding a pro-poor scenario competition, with the best scenarios from around the world receiving cash prizes of up to \$5,000. Scenario submissions must be received April 30, 2011.

Scenarios are descriptions of alternative paths into the future that allow comparison of different strategies and policies that could be pursued in the present. Scenarios are an important tool for learning and for decision-making when there is high uncertainty. Pro-poor scenarios are scenarios that explicitly take the perspective of poor and marginalized populations in considering potential future circumstances. These scenarios can be used to identify emerging challenges and opportunities that can be addressed in order to improve the lives of these populations.

In March 2009, the IAF and the Rockefeller Foundation gathered scholars and practitioners from around the world to explore how foresight could be used to enhance and accelerate development opportunities for poor and marginalized populations. One of the meeting's recommendations was to encourage people from the academic, civil society, and policy communities to develop scenarios that create narratives and shared visions for the future of poor communities. With this goal in mind, IAF designed this "Pro-poor Scenario Toolkit." This toolkit specifically invites policy-makers, researchers, students, professors, and active citizens to explore the future as stakeholders who can identify actions to be taken today to avoid feared consequences and achieve desired societies.

For the scenario competition, IAF is seeking submissions of scenarios produced from the perspectives of poor populations and that look ahead to the year 2039. Scenarios will be evaluated by a panel of experts in the fields of futures studies and international development. Winning scenarios will be posted on IAF's website and will be awarded a cash prize. The Pro-poor Scenario Toolkit can be downloaded from IAF's website at www.altfutures.org/pro_poor.

To be eligible for an award, submitted scenarios must:

- Give voice to the perspectives of poor populations and communities. That is, the scenarios must be well developed based on forecasts that would be important to the future of the global poor.
- Present at least three different scenarios for the future.
- Connect compelling and plausible images of the future with present realities to clarify decisions and provide meaningful recommendations for action.
- Include contact information for all co-authors and list all participants.
- Special consideration will be given to scenarios that have engaged or included poor or marginalized populations in their development.

Judges for the scenario competition include: Ilmas Futehally, Executive Director, Strategic Foresight Group; Jerome C. Glenn, Executive Director, Millennium Project; Dr. Rockefeller P. Herisse, Senior Alliance Advisor, USAID; Dr. Sohail Inayatullah, Professor, Tamkang University's Graduate Institute of Futures Studies; Claudia Juech, Managing Director, The Rockefeller Foundation; Arthur Muliro, Deputy Managing Director, Society for International Development; Dr. Claire Nelson, Vice President, IDB Staff Association, Inter-American Development Bank; Sanne Tikjoeb, development consultant; and Jonathan C. Peck, President, Institute for Alternative Futures.

IAF Conducts Focus Groups on the Future of Primary Care

IAF is conducting focus groups to discuss preliminary forecasts of what primary care may look like in

2025. The focus groups are part of a project on the Future of Primary Care that is funded by the Kresge Foundation. This is a great opportunity for physicians, nurses, and other stakeholders to consider industry-wide changes and provide input to this project. IAF Chairman Clem Bezold has already held meetings with members of the Henry Ford Health System and Wayne State University nursing program. Additional focus groups are scheduled with the medical services of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force.

Participants are asked to discuss forecasts for a range of areas, including precision medicine, virtual and cyber care, advances in knowledge of disease (both prevention and treatment), community health, person-centered care, care team make-up, non-traditional patient encounters, health care access, patient-physician relationships, and health care space. For example:

- . In 2025, primary care is nearly inseparable from community health. Providers are networked with neighborhoods and share their data (with appropriate privacy and security protections) with public health officials, who coordinate activities to improve population health. Medical records include home location as a vital sign, with mapping information on the degree of health and safety risks, unemployment rates and other social determinants. Primary care provider information systems provide alerts on community health conditions and, as relevant, include that in each person's record. This ongoing health data mining is used by local governments and providers to focus on changing local health threats or specific conditions. Primary care providers take the initiative to collaborate in addressing community needs.*
- . In 2025, primary care encompasses precision medicine where providers model the genome, metabolomics, and proteomics, as well as a better understanding of how social determinants affect health outcome of each individual. This analysis captures the upward and downward causation chains for each person starting with his or her genome, upward through the cellular level, tissue level, organ level, organism level, and on to the community level. With this capacity, health care providers can effectively identify and measure changes in pre-disease and disease, and predict which therapies will be most effective for each person. Providers will identify healthy patterns for each person and be able to work with the person to correct deviation back to the wellness zone.*

[Contact IAF](#) to share your thoughts on these forecasts or to invite us to host a focus group on the future of primary care with members of your own organization.

IAF Survey Identifies Community Health Centers Leveraging the Social Determinants of Health

IAF is continuing to collect cases of community health centers (CHCs) working to change conditions in the community and environment in order to improve health. Some of the CHC efforts we have discovered so far include: teaching a teen mother how to care for herself and her child while balancing courses to obtain a high school diploma; creating a bike exchange program for kids to provide a safe hangout place while they get exercise; arranging farmer's markets in the community; and rejuvenating brownfields to be used for recreation by families, and to improve wildlife habitat and water quality.

We know that there are many more cases out there that have yet to be identified. This project is a chance for you to help identify community health centers who are reaching out to shape the social determinants of health. You can do so in one of two ways: [visit IAF's website to nominate a health center](#), or call Linda Berry or Yasemin Arikan at (703) 684-5880.

CHCs have been promoting community health since their inception, and there is much to learn from their efforts beyond the clinic. Please help us identify and understand them. Your input will help us develop scenarios for the future directions of this work, as well as to formulate principles by which these activities can be expanded throughout the healthcare system. The insights and lessons from these initiatives and scenarios will then be shared with the safety net community, the broader health care community, the public, and policy makers.

Upcoming Events

[Leveraging the Social Determinants of Health](#), session at NACHC P&I Forum. Clem Bezold (IAF), Jonathan N. Tobin (CDN), and David M. Stevens, MD (NACHC). March 25, 2011, from 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM in Washington, DC.

[Vulnerability 2030 - Rethinking the Future for Vulnerable Populations](#), interactive webinar to discuss 2030 vulnerability scenarios. Clem Bezold (IAF), Eric Meade (IAF), and Jane Lowe (RWJF). April 12, 2011 at 1:30 PM (EST) / 10:30 AM (PST).

[Wiser Futures: Using Futures Tools to Better Understand and Create the Future](#), pre-conference workshop at WorldFuture 2011: Moving from Vision to Action. Clem Bezold and Eric Meade. July 8, 2011 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

[The Future and Urban Health Equity](#), session at WorldFuture 2011. Clem Bezold and Trevor Hancock. July 2011 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

The Institute for Alternative Futures is a 501(c)3 non-profit research and education organization based in Alexandria, VA. IAF was founded in 1977 by Clem Bezold, Alvin Toffler, and James Dator. IAF has a long track record of using forecasts, scenarios, visioning, and other futures tools to help leading organizations understand the likely, challenging, and visionary developments that may take place in their environments, and to develop robust and visionary strategies that account for the inherent uncertainty of the future. IAF's past clients include the World Health Organization, AARP, American Cancer Society, and Rockefeller Foundation, as well as a wide range of multinational corporations through its for-profit subsidiary, Alternative Futures Associates. To learn more about what we can do for your organization, call us at (703) 684-5880 or write to futurist@altfutures.org.

We'd like to know what you think! Please send us your comments, questions, and things you would like to see included in future issues to futurist@altfutures.org.

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