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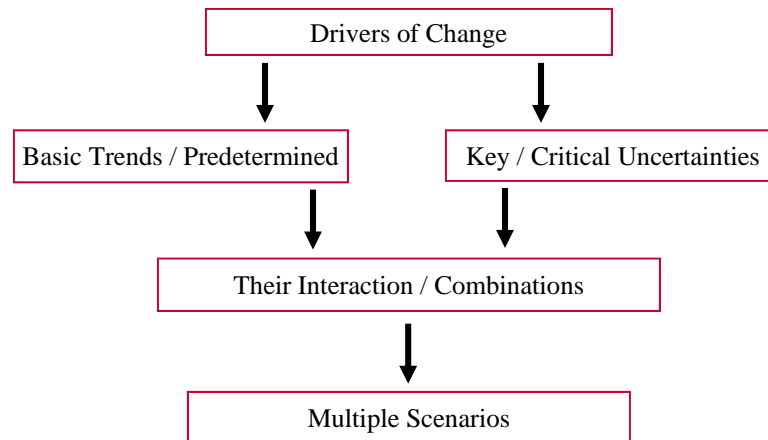
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Scenario Planning: Learning from the Future



The heading above reads ‘... *from the future*’ deliberately. Many organizations operate as though there were *one certain future*. And when that one certain future does not come about, they find themselves surprised and unprepared for the future that *does* come about. Scenario Planning invites participants to identify current trends expected to continue into the planning horizon. It also invites them to identify areas of current uncertainty where they expect resolution within the planning horizon. Then the organization devises several scenarios describing unique *plausible* futures leading to a rich fifth scenario of the *desired* future. In the process, they heighten their awareness of just which of those scenarios seems to be unfolding and can take more timely actions as a consequence. Pioneered by Royal Dutch Shell, organizations have effectively used this technique at scales from a single department to an entire nation.

“The real purpose of the scenario process is not to produce a ‘good’ and interesting document about the future; it is to impact and improve the *internal* map, the image of reality in the heads of the critical decision makers.”
Pierre Wack