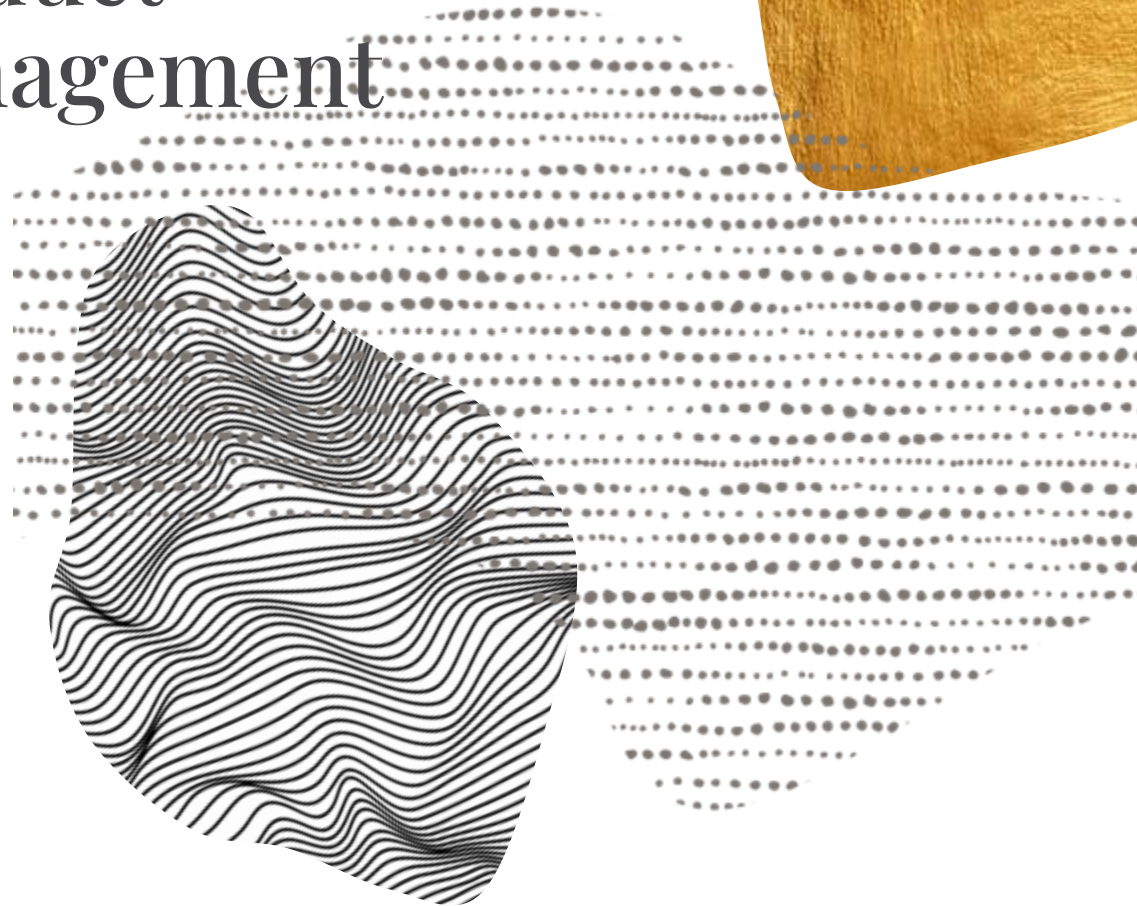


Integrating Strategic Foresight into Product Management



JOD KAFTAN
HEAD OF DESIGN, LAUNCH BY NTT DATA
SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2025

CONTENTS

Part 1: Theory

Foresight and Futures Thinking
Foundations

Part 2: Practice

Integrating Foresight into the
Enterprise

**THEORY /
FORESIGHT AND
FUTURES
THINKING
FOUNDATIONS**





Our species is
misnamed. Though
sapiens defines us as
'wise,' what humans
do especially well is
prospect the future.
We are Homo
prospectus.

—MARTIN SELIGMAN, HOMO PROSPECTUS

Defining Strategic Foresight & Futures Thinking

FUTURES THINKING

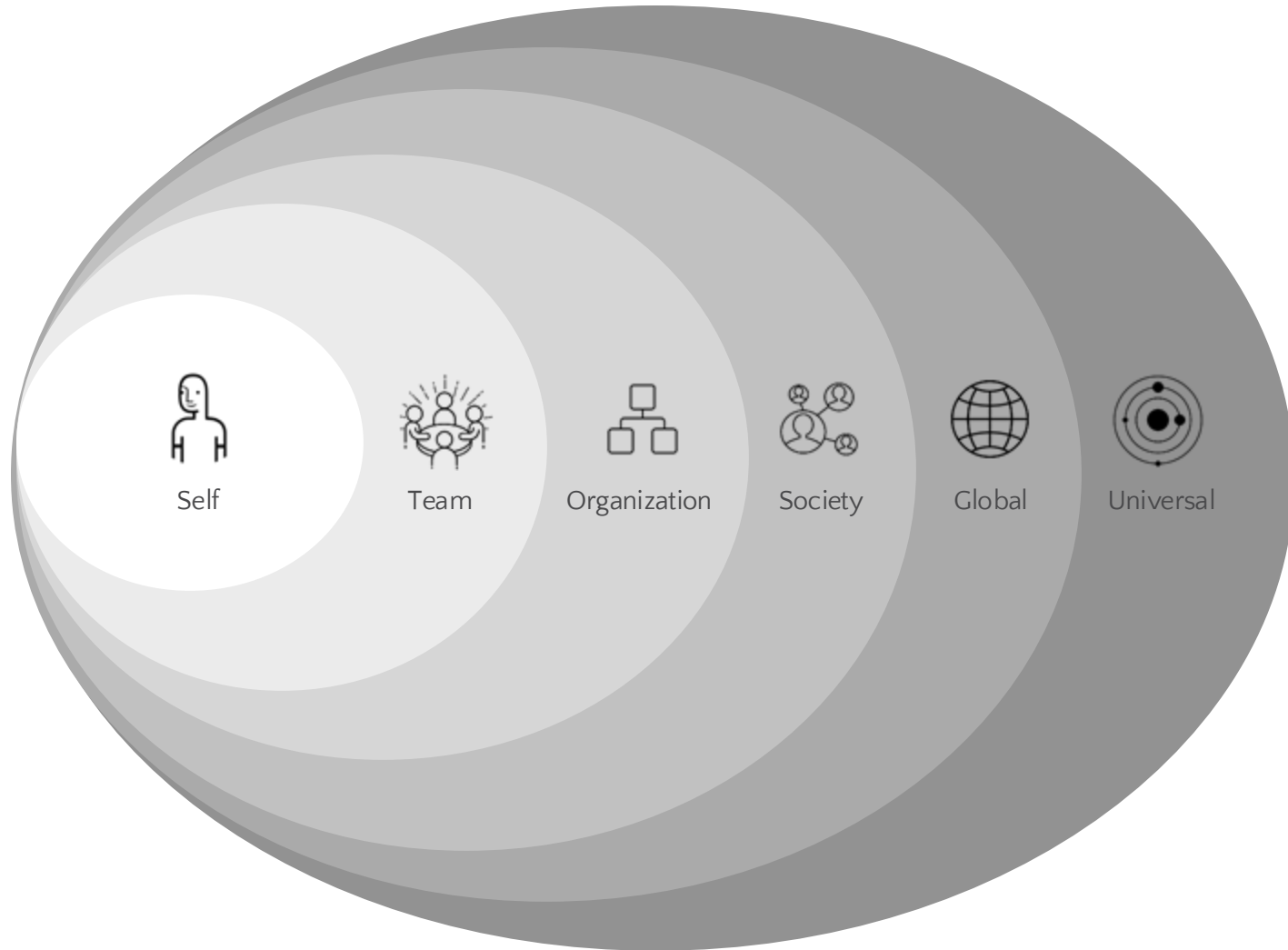
Futures thinking is a mindset that involves exploring potential future scenarios, trends, and drivers of change. It is a creative and exploratory process that acknowledges uncertainty and considers multiple possible futures:



STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Strategic foresight is a structured and systematic approach used by organizations to anticipate and prepare for potential future opportunities and challenges.

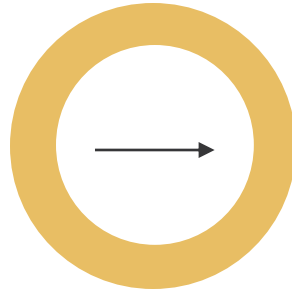
Foresight Considers 6 Domains



Futures Archetypes

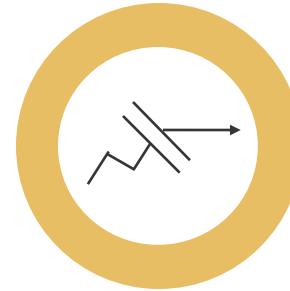
BASELINE > SAME RULES

The system continues along its current trajectory with no shifts or surprises.



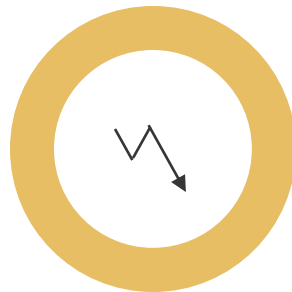
NEW EQUILLIBRIUM > CHANGING RULES

The system reaches a new balance among competing forces but is still within the same overall structure.



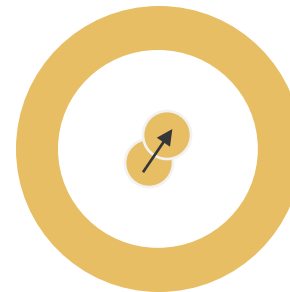
COLLAPSE > NO RULES

The system falls apart into a state of dysfunction under the weight of “negative” forces.

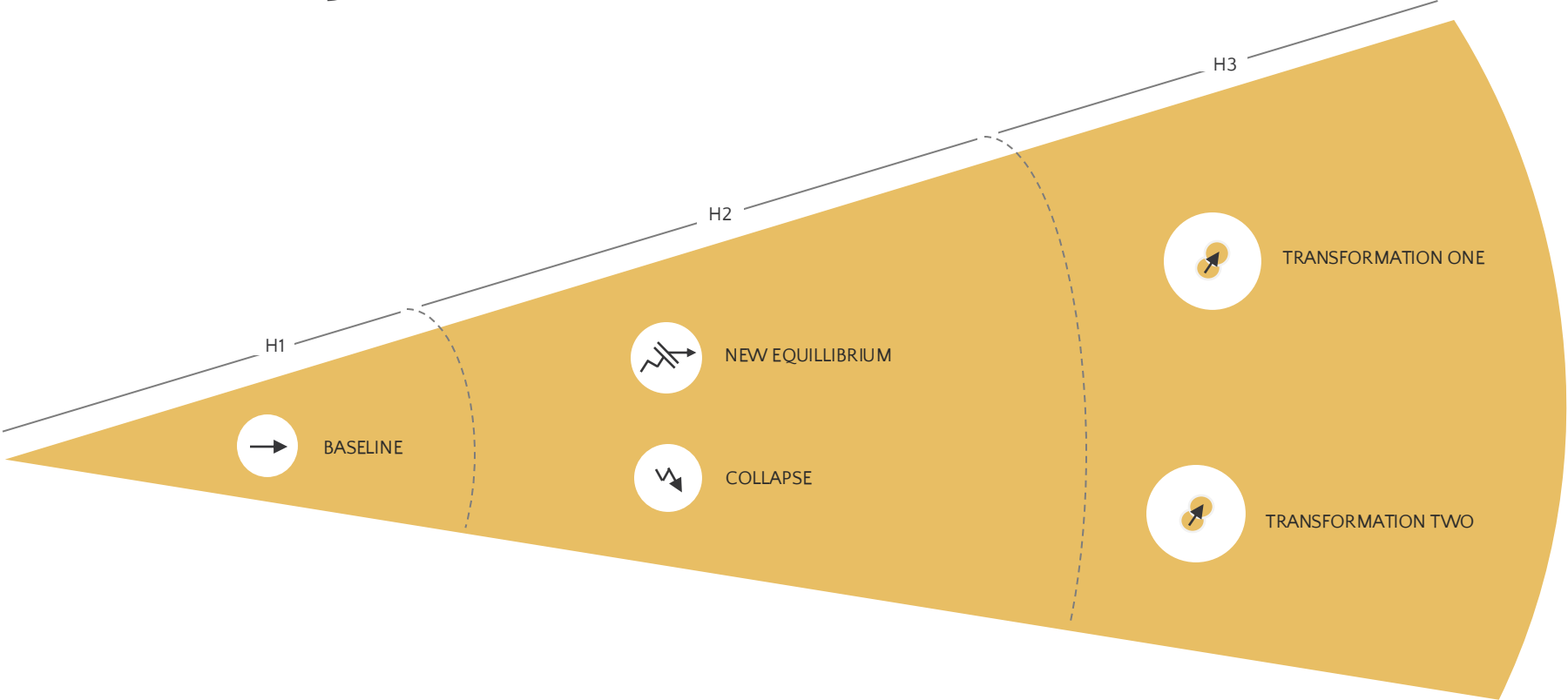


TRANSFORMATION > NEW RULES

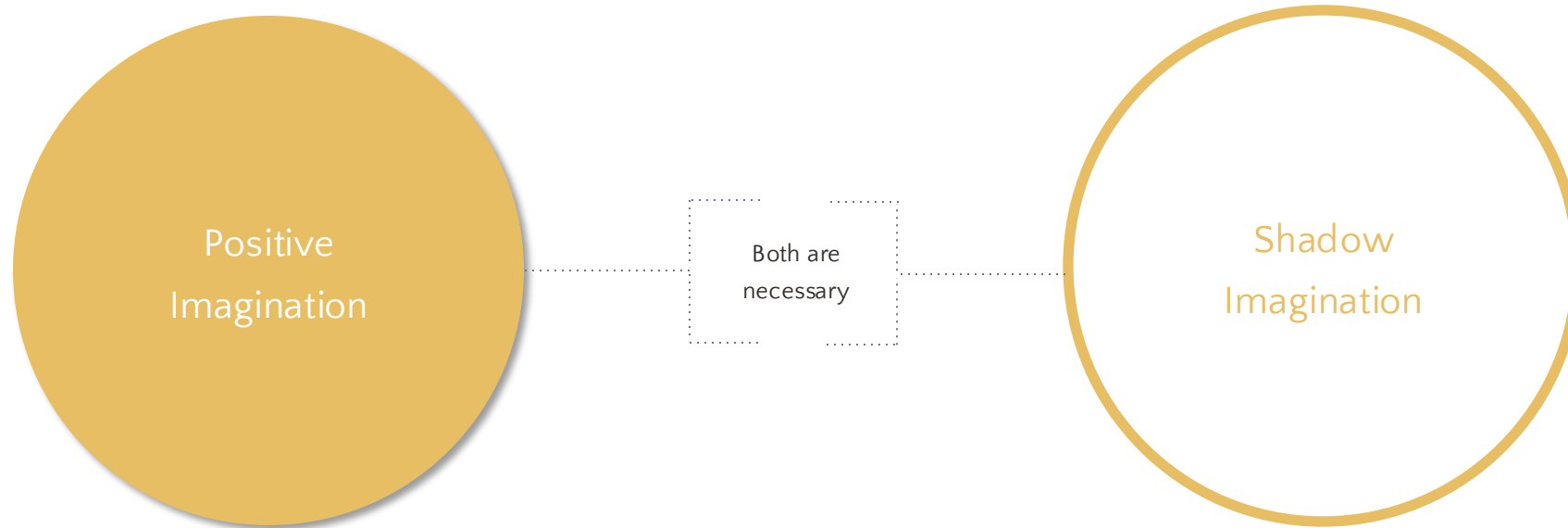
The system can longer be saved, and a new one replaces it.



The Houston Hat Archetypes and The 3 Horizons

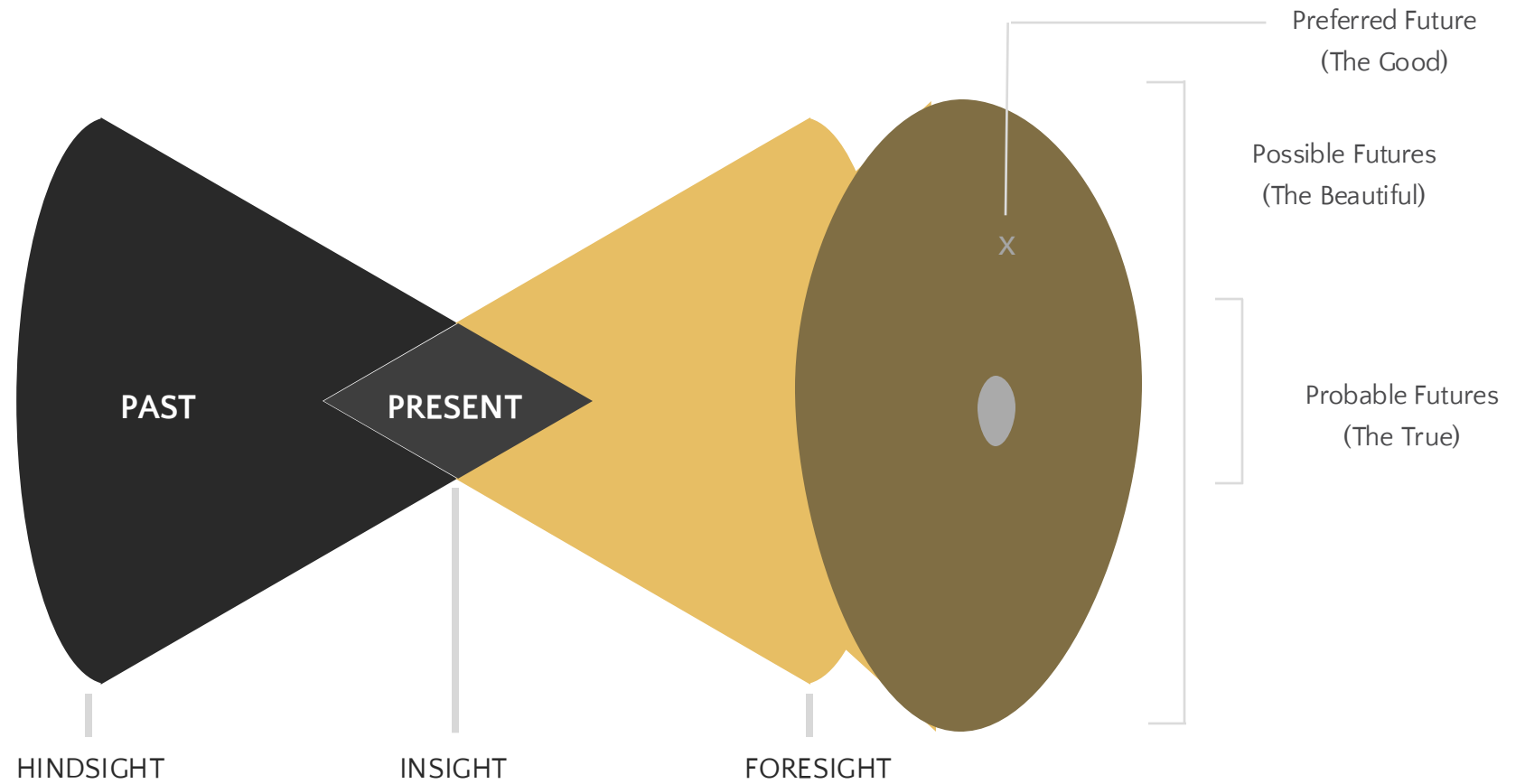


The Two Imagination Mindsets for Futures Thinking



The Foresight Hourglass

The past, the present and the future all have a role in foresight

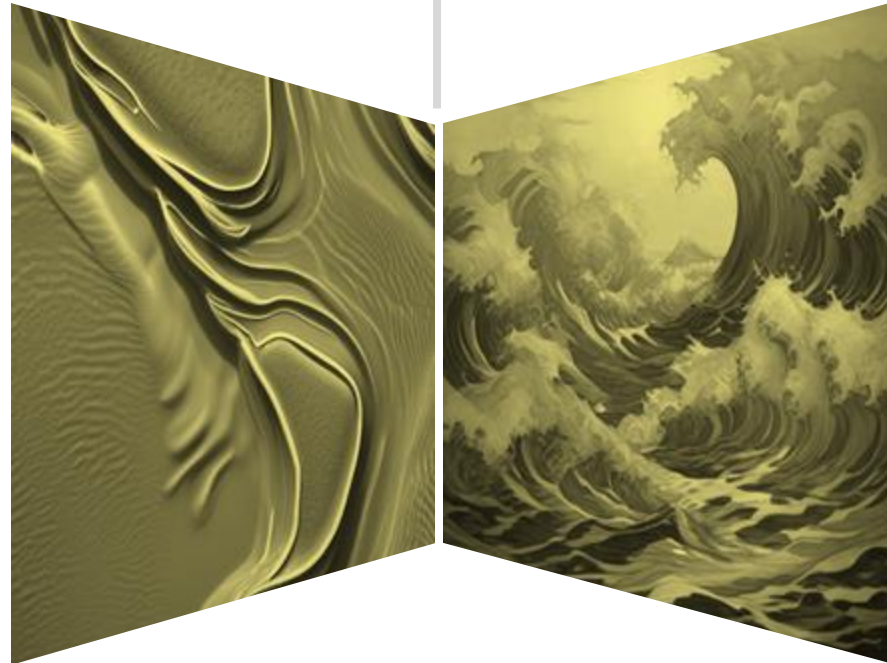


Futures Vocabulary Drivers & Signals

Drivers

Drivers are “tides” or, underlying factors in the present that shape the future with deep roots in historical patterns of change.

They can be cultural, economic, technological, or environmental – but most often they are a combination of these forces.



Signals

Signals are “waves,” or a “hit” when we scan our surroundings for evidence of a “specific example the future happening today.”

A signal is often a recent small or local innovation (a new product, service, initiative, policy, datapoint, social convention or technology) with the potential to affect how we we might live in the future..

Examples of Some Recent Signals



Floating Cities
United Nations unveiled a design for a new floating city that can withstand category five hurricanes

OCEANIX CITY



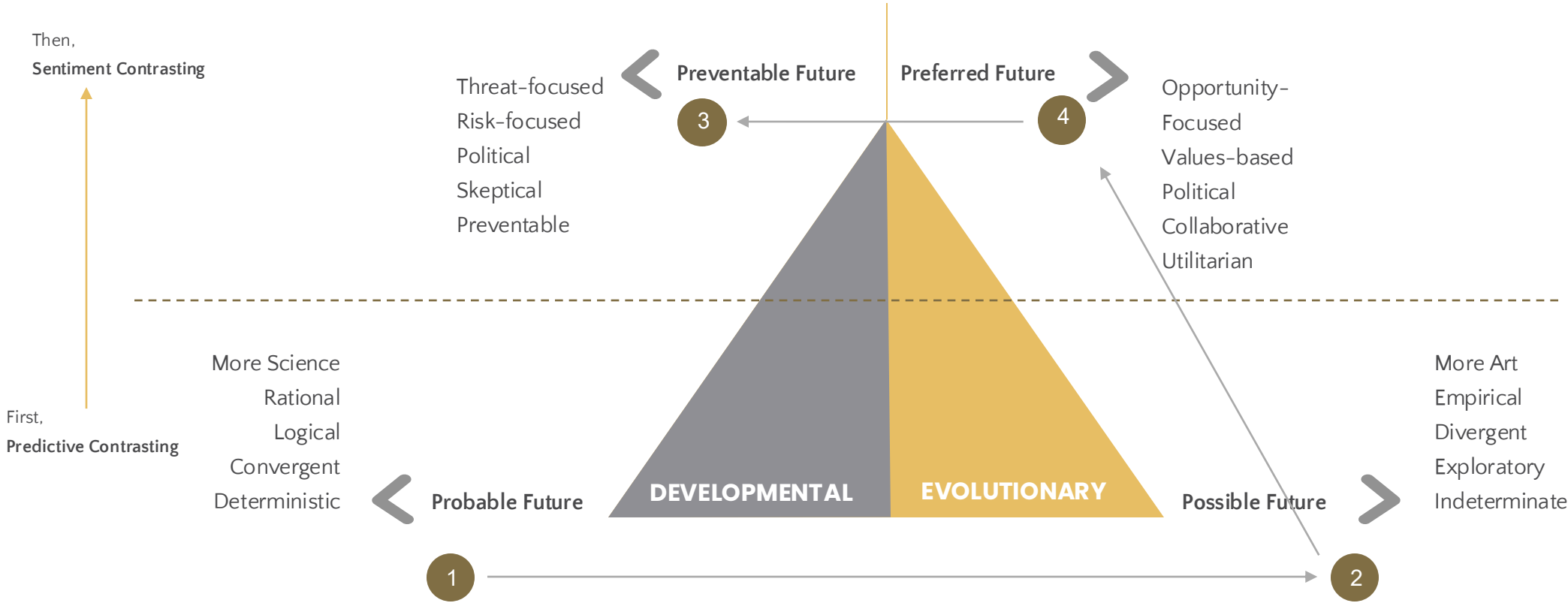
Distributed Mobile Solar Grids
The next wave of economic justice provides energy access to the unhoused



Cell-Cultured Sushi
Creates the potential to spare billions of living creatures from overfishing and reduced use of precious land resources used to feed fish

The Foresight Pyramid

Foresight impact is achieved through the integration of rational and emotional processes in living systems.





Every society faces not merely a succession of probable futures, but an array of possible futures, and a conflict over preferable futures.

—AIVIN TOFFLER, *FUTURE SHOCK*





Futures are Prototyped with Scenarios

SCENARIOS

There are a few types of futures scenarios—fiction, recollection and history. All have their value. Ultimately they all tell a story so the future becomes more credible and raises questions we're not asking in the present.

A scenario is a familiar presentation language for readers, and they can more readily grasp the changes to one's life that emerge from the scenario. A story model lets you describe some of the more nuanced aspects of a scenarist future



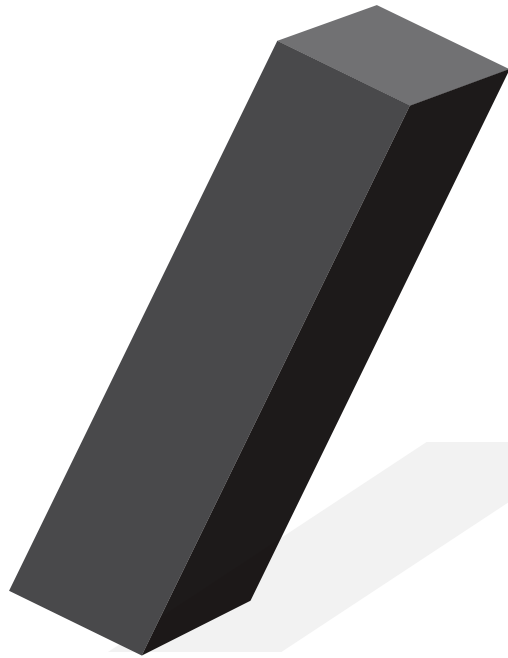
The background is a technical drawing or architectural sketch in a light olive-green color. It features various geometric shapes, including circles, triangles, and lines, which appear to be part of a larger design or engineering plan. The drawing is somewhat faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

**PRACTICE /
INTEGRATING
FORESIGHT INTO
ENTERPRISE
PRODUCT
MANAGEMENT**

Typical Barriers to Long-Term Thinking



The Foresight Process



LEARN



FORESEE



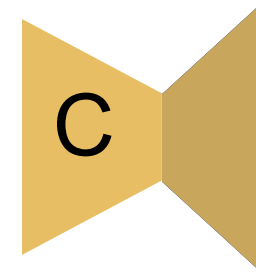
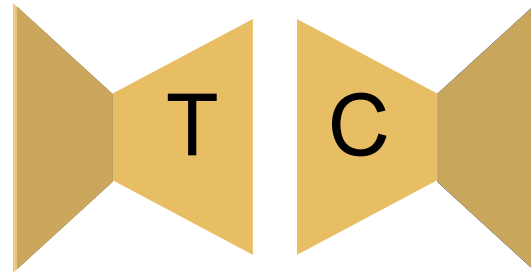
ACT

Move over STEEP and Hello TRACES

Scanning, planning and monitoring through the lenses of TRACES is more product relevant

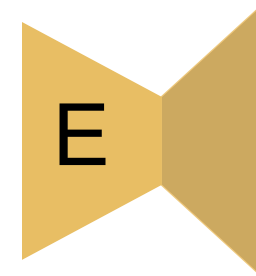
TECHNICAL DEBT

There are a few types of futures scenarios—fiction, recollection and history. All have their value.



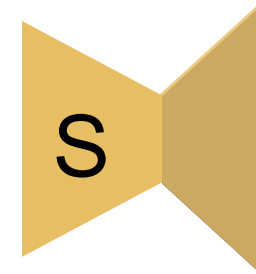
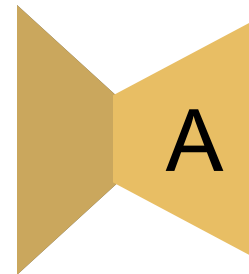
REGULATORY CHANGES

Legal requirements affecting design and scope



AUDIENCE SHIFT

Evolving user needs, behaviors and preferences over time



COMPETITION

Impact of rival companies on product strategy

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Broader financial decisions impact product choices

SUBSTITUTE TECHNOLOGIES

Emergent tech that could disrupt the current product or service

Strategy + Foresight

Jedi mind trick—integrate foresight into medium- and short-term planning with TRACES

TECHNICAL DEBT

List outdated technologies and legacy system deficiencies

REGULATORY CHANGES

Identify risks from new regulation or compliance changes.

AUDIENCE SHIFT

Note shifts in user demographics, behaviors, expectations.

COMPETITION










List competitive threats and market position challenges.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Identify economic factors affecting budget or design needs.

SUBSTITUTE TECHNOLOGIES

List emerging tech that could disrupt current practices.

		LOWER PROBABILITY UNKNOWN UNKNOWN	MEDIUM PROBABILITY KNOWN UNKNOWN	HIGH PROBABILITY KNOWN KNOWN
M	LONG TERM	Future Scanning  Anticipate and assess emerging threats	Long Term Monitoring  Constantly track emerging threats	Strategic Planning  Regularly assess emerging threats
	EDIUM TERM	Periodic Review  Regularly assess emerging threats	Measured Approach  Address risks over the medium term	Proactive Response  Plan for emerging challenges
	SHORT TERM	Routine Mitigation  Systematically handle emerging risks	Prompt Response  Efficiently address emerging challenges	Immediate Response  Act immediately on urgent challenges

Where to Start

Fail we may. Sail we must



Learn

UNKNOWN
UNKNOWN



Suggested Tools & Methods

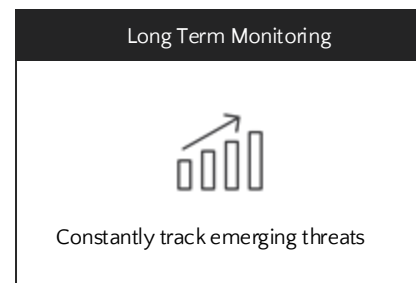
TRACES Threat Identification

Signal Scan



Foresee

KNOWN
UNKNOWN



Suggested Tools & Methods

TRACES Adaptive Risk Response

Cluster into Drivers



Act

KNOWN
KNOWN



Suggested Tools & Methods

Strategy Prototyping & Scenarios

Speculative Design



Q&A





THANK YOU!

JOD KAFTAN

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jodkaftan>

APPENDIX



How-To/Learning References



LEARN

SIGNALS GUILD- [Link](#)

HORIZON STEEP SCAN - [Link](#)

RETROFUTURIST ANALYSIS - [Link](#)

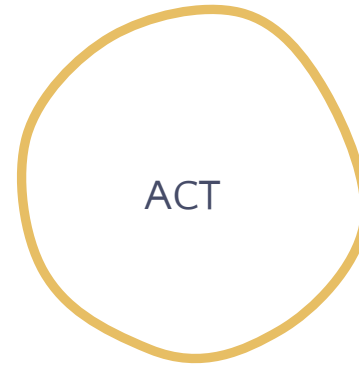


FORESEE

FUTURES WHEEL - [Link](#)

SCENARIOS - [Link](#)

FUTURES ARTIFACTS - [Link](#)



ACT

FUTURES WORKSHOP - [Link](#)

THIRD HORIZON INTEGRATION - [Link](#)

ACTION ROADMAP - [Link](#)





SIGNALS GUILD

What: Create a cross-functional tribe of Futurists that are regularly collecting signals related to your product/industry. Signals can be shared over Slack/Teams and then discussed prioritized in regular f2f check-ins

Good For: Managing uncertainty and the unpredictable



HORIZON STEEP SCAN

What: Capture signals around a central question (i.e. “how might Americans commute to work in the future?”) through STEEP lenses, evaluate the impact and extract opportunities.

Good For: Managing uncertainty and the unpredictable



RETROFUTURIST ANALYSIS

What: This is an activity in which you look back to look forward with the purpose of understanding how historic futurist movements envisioned progress—including what change they foresaw and why, as well as the unintended consequences in their pov.

Good For: Short-Term Revenue Pressure





FUTURES WHEEL

What: The Futures Wheel is a visual representation that resembles a wheel, with the central event or idea at its core and multiple spokes branching out to explore related consequences. Provides a structured approach to exploring a wide range of consequences and their relationships

Good For: Managing uncertainty and the unpredictable



SCENARIOS

What: Scenarios in strategic foresight are alternative, plausible, and equally likely futures developed to anticipate and prepare for potential challenges that may impact a project or organization. Scenario planning is a tool for simplifying complexity and gaining strategic insight into wicked problems, rather than predicting the future or forecasting trend

Good For: Managing uncertainty and the unpredictable



FUTURES ARTIFACTS

What: This is an activity in which you look back to look forward with the purpose of understanding how historic futurist movements envisioned progress—including what change they foresaw and why, as well as the unintended consequences in their pov.

Good For: Managing uncertainty and the unpredictable





FUTURES WORKSHOP

What: Bring together a x-functional group through the foresight/futures end-to-end process –from signals to action roadmap in a single workshop.

Good For: Aligning with existing processes



THIRD HORIZON INTEGRATION

What: The Third Horizon (H3) specifically focuses on transformative emerging changes, ideas about possible futures, and visions of preferred futures. It represents the long-term successor to the current state of affairs (business-as-usual) and is characterized by completely new opportunities that grow from fringe activities in the present

Good For: Short-term revenue pressure



ACTION ROADMAP

What: AR is a practical instrument within the IFTF's toolkit that guides users to work backwards from their envisioned future to the present, identifying specific steps they can take today, this month, this year, and this decade to make a significant impact on the future³.

Good For: Short-Term Revenue Pressure

