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Scenarios and Strategy 503

TRIMESTER 2 2008 INTENSIVE				
Unit Index No	13628			
Credits	25			
Pre-Requisites	None			
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Lecturers	Linley Lord, Nada Jabado and Jeff Pow			
Day	Thurs 14, Fri 15, Sat 16 August and Thurs 4, Fri 5, Sat 6 September			
Time	9.00-4.30pm			
Location & Room	GSB, 78 Murray St, Perth Room TBC			
TEXTBOOK AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION				
<p>Ralston, B., and Wilson, I. (2006) <i>The Scenario Planning Handbook: A Practitioner's Guide to Developing and Using Scenarios to Direct Strategy in Today's Uncertain Times</i>, Thomson South-Western, Ohio.</p> <p>You are expected to read the Case Study Strategic planning at UPS that will be available on Day 1 of the program and to discuss and respond to the questions that accompany the Case Study in Session 1, Day 2.</p>				
METHOD OF ASSESSMENT				
Assessment	Outcome Assessed	Type of Assessment	Marks	Submission Dates
Assessment 1: Environmental scan	1, 2, 9	Individual	40%	4 September
Assessment 2: Scenario development Part A: Presentation of scenario outline	1	Group	15%	6 September
Assessment 3: Scenario development Part B: Scenario writing	1, 2, 3	Group and individual	45%	26 September

This unit outline will be considered FINAL as of 4 August 2008.

Any changes made after this date will be communicated to you directly by your Unit Controller. Full information on assessment is under the heading "Assessment Overview". This unit outline should be read in conjunction with the GSB's Student Guidebook available from the "quick links" under the GSB homepage: <http://www.gsb.curtin.edu.au>

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INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT

Scenario planning or scenario thinking (as it also referred to), is a powerful tool used by organisations to explore possible future business environments. It forms part of an organisations strategic analysis and decision making frameworks helping to determine a course of action and assisting in resource allocation in complex and rapidly changing environments.

Scenario thinking is used to drive strategy by aligning strategic direction with changes to an organisations external operating environment. The aim is the development of robust strategies that are more resilient in times of change and which have taken account of potential future opportunities and threats to the organisation.

The unit covers the principles of scenario thinking and how these are applied in organisations. It has a practical focus which will encourage you to develop your own scenario thinking and scenario writing skills which can then be applied in your own organisational settings.

All pieces of assessment must be submitted to pass this unit.

AIMS, ATTRIBUTES AND OUTCOMES

The aim of this unit is to provide you with an understanding of the principles of scenario thinking and its application in an organisational setting. An understanding of the various theoretical perspectives that relate to scenario thinking as well as the connection between scenario use, organisational learning, strategy formulation and decision making will be gained. Learning outcomes within Scenarios and Strategy 503 will contribute to the achievement of the overarching learning outcomes sought for graduates from the Graduate School of Business. For further details on the set of nine Graduate Attributes please refer to the GSB student guidebook available from www.gsb.curtin.edu.au. They are also listed in Appendix A of this document.

Attributes	Learning Outcomes	Assessment
1	Apply the major scenario thinking concepts, models and theories to enhance organisational learning and long term success	Assessments 1, 2 and 3
2	Integrate and evaluate information from a variety of sources to understand changes in the business environment	Assessments 1 and 3
3	Access and utilise information about relevant topics from a wide range of sources, including online academic databases, CD-ROMs, publicly available internet sources, futures and foresight publications	Assessment 3
9	Work effectively within a diverse team to maximise input from all team members to develop rich scenarios	Assessment 1

TEXTBOOK

Ralston, B., and Wilson, I. (2006) *The Scenario Planning Handbook: A Practitioner’s Guide to Developing and Using Scenarios to Direct Strategy in Today’s Uncertain Times*, Thomson South-Western, Ohio.

RECOMMENDED READING

The following books, journals and websites may be of use to you during the unit.

Books

- Lindgren, M., and Banhold, H. 2003, *Scenario Planning the Link Between Future and Strategy*. HoundMills, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Fahey, L. and Randall, R. Eds 1998, *Learning from the Future: Competitive Foresight Scenarios*, John Wiley and Sons, New York.
- Godet, M. 2001, *Creating Futures: Scenario Planning as a Strategic Management Tool*, Economica, London
- Georgantzas, N. and Acar, W 1995, *Scenario Driven Planning: Learning to Manage Strategic Uncertainty*, Quorum Books, Westport Connecticut
- Ringland, G. 2002, *Scenarios in business*. John Wiley and Sons, Chichester
- Ringland, G. 2002, *Scenarios in public policy*. John Wiley and Sons, Chichester
- Ringland, G 1998, *Scenario Planning Managing for the Future*, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester
- Schoemaker, P. 2002, *Profiting from Uncertainty*, The Free Press, New York
- Schwartz, P. 1991, *The Art of the Long View*, Doubleday Currency, New York
- van der Heijden, K 1996, *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester
- van der Heijden, K., Brandfield, G., Cairns, G., and Wright, G. 2002 *The Sixth Sense Accelerating Organisational Learning with Scenarios*. John Wiley and Sons, Ltd West Sussex.

Journals and Professional Magazines

- Business Horizons
- Fast Company
- Futures
- Harvard Business Review
- Long Range Planning
- Technological Forecasting and Social Change
- The Futurist

Web sites

Bt Technology timeline <http://www.btplc.com/Innovation/News/timeline/index.htm>

Global Business Network (ideas homepage)

<http://www.gbn.com/IdeasHomepageDisplayServlet.srv>

Generon Consulting http://www.arlingtoninstitute.org/future/Civic_scenarios.pdf

Idon Ltd <http://www.idonresources.com/software.html>

The Mont Fleur Scenarios <http://www.generonconsulting.com/publications/papers/>

Shell International Ltd <http://www.search.shell.com/cgi-bin/rsearch.cgi>

If obtaining references from the Internet, please be sure you are able to quote the author/s, date of publication, and journal source. If you are unable to obtain this information, you will be unable to identify the authenticity of your reference.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT				
Assessment	Outcome Assessed	Type of Assessment	Marks	Submission Dates
Assessment 1: Environmental scan	1, 2, 9	Individual	40%	4 September
Assessment 2: Scenario development Part A: Presentation of scenario outline	1	Group	15%	6 September
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Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Environmental Scan (40%)

Word Limit: 2500 words ± 10% (word count must be shown on cover page)

van der Heijden et al (2002: 156-158) suggest that most STEEP (Societal, Technological, Economic, Ecological, and Political) analyses result in long lists of individual variables that lack integration and systemic insights. As a result they do not move thinking forward and are of little practical value in strategy development. Ralston and Wilson (2006: 187-190) suggest that a ‘multi-faceted environmental analysis capability – a form of corporate ‘early warning system radar’ is needed to enable organisations to meet future challenges.

Keeping these ‘warnings’ in mind you are required to prepare an environmental scanning report for your organisation. To focus your report, think about a key challenge or issue that your organisation is currently facing for which there is considerable uncertainty. Examples may include expansion into new markets, possible new products or services, new competitors entering the market, changing consumer expectations etc.

Your report should cover the STEEP areas but you are expected to synthesise and integrate the information. You are trying to develop a greater understanding of the inter-connections between multiple trends and what appears as random data so that underlying structures that drive change can be surfaced. Read p187-190 of your text as it provides some useful insights regarding integration and relevance of trends You may also find the following questions a useful prompt (van der Heijden et al 2002 p158) in helping you to synthesise and integrate the information.

- What is driving this particular situation?
- What is happening now in the environment that matters or could matter in the future?
- What are other current 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 looking at?
- What do we need to see that is now invisible and that no one else is seeing?

Think about how you will present the information. Do not just provide lists of trends!

Assessment 2: Scenario Development - Part A: Presentation of Scenario Outline (15%)

In groups of 4-6 (you will be placed in your scenario group on the first day) present the scenario outline your group has developed (see Scenario Development Part B) to the class. Your presentation will be a maximum of twenty minutes plus five-ten minutes for questions and discussion regarding your scenario and its further development. 10% of the mark will be allocated for the content of the scenario and 5% will be allocated for the group presentation (all members of the group are required to be involved in the presentation).

Your aim is to tell the story of the scenario you are developing. This should not be just a dot point, power-point presentation of the process or a list of trends and drivers of change. Rather you are trying to engage your audience by providing a compelling view of the future that is both plausible and internally consistent. (You are not writing science fiction or fantasy!)

Assessment 3: Scenario Development - Part B: Scenario Writing (45%)
Word Limit: 4500 words

Note - There are three parts to this assessment:

Part 1 (20%) is the development of the full scenario that has been assigned to your group.

Part 2 (10%) focuses on the strategic decision making that follows scenario development.

Part 3 (15%) focuses on your individual learning.

Part 1: (2000 words max)

However good our futures research may be, we shall never be able to escape from the ultimate dilemmas that all our knowledge is about the past, and all our decisions are about the future.

Ian Wilson

You will be assigned to a scenario group on the first day of class (groups of 4-6). Each group is required to fully develop one scenario (your group will be assigned the scenario you are required to develop) in response to the issue identified in the case study. The case study will be presented on day one.

Keeping Wilson's quote in mind your group's role is to develop a scenario of the future that can be used to help determine a course of action and to provide insights regarding strategic decisions in complex and rapidly changing environments.

Scenarios will be generated based on the scenario matrix developed in class. You are expected to use relevant academic and other appropriate literature and expert input where appropriate to develop your scenario.

Part 2: (1000 words)

Developing scenarios is part of the process of improving an organisation's strategic thinking capabilities. The next step for organisations is to use scenarios to improve their strategic decision making. What advice would you give to help an organisation to determine the steps it needs to take to move from scenario to strategy? Your advice should be supported by relevant academic literature.

Part 3: (1500 words)

Scenario planning is generally a group process but one that requires a skilled facilitator. As a result of your involvement in this scenario planning process you are asked to reflect on what you have learned regarding the scenario process and its application. Specifically you should answer the following question

What do you see as the key challenges for you in applying scenario thinking in your organisation? (If you are not currently working then consider your previous organisation).

You should relate your answer to your experience in your scenario group and the reading you have undertaken regarding the scenario process.

Submission Guidelines for Assignments

Please check the preferences of your tutor regarding submission of assignments in either electronic or hard format. If emailing your assignments to your lecturer please note that due to the possibility of technological difficulties with servers, viruses, different software packages etc., you are ALSO required to hand in a hard copy of your assignment by the due date.

Please retain a copy of every assignment submitted for marking for your own records. This copy will be required in the event of an assignment being misplaced or unaccounted for. The onus is on the student to make available another copy of the assignment for marking.

All Assignments for this Unit, other than the final assignment are to be submitted by 5:30pm (at start of class) of the date shown on this student guide. Assignments will be assessed within 10 working days.

- Please use the following specifications for your assignment layout:
 - Font: Times Roman 12
 - Spacing: 1.5 spacing or double spacing
 - Margins: at least 3 cm top/bottom/right and 4cm on left
- Please include a cover-sheet setting out:
 - your name
 - student number
 - unit title
 - the title of the assignment, and
 - a word count, excluding references and any appendices
- Feedback sheets will be provided in class and indicate the key areas that will be considered when marking your work. Please refer to the appropriate feedback sheet when planning and completing your assignment to ensure you have included all the necessary sections.
- Papers will not be marked beyond the page limit/word count.
- Your assignment should be thoroughly checked for typing, spelling and grammatical errors. You may consider having a colleague proof read your assignment before you submit it.
- Make sure you acknowledge all sources used to write your assignment – eg. journals, books, articles etc...
- All assessment MUST be referenced in the Chicago Style. List them at the end of your assignment in Chicago Style.
- Use a range of scholarly material...eg. Peer-reviewed articles from the scholarly databases, textbooks and material from the Internet. Material from the Internet often, however, does not have the same peer review mechanisms in place so you must be wary what you use as literature to support your reviews.
- It is not necessary to have your assignment bound, a simple staple in the left hand corner is sufficient.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the preparation of individual written assignments students are encouraged to discuss and exchange information. However, the various papers will be treated as an individual exercise and plagiarism is to be avoided. Where there is evidence of plagiarism the student will be awarded a fail grade for the unit.

Acknowledge not only direct quotes but also the source of ideas, examples and materials which are not a direct quote, but which have been paraphrased from another source. All tables and charts must be sourced. For the University's policy on plagiarism, please refer to the **Graduate School of Business Student Guidebook**. The GSB is committed to undertaking plagiarism audits on assessments submitted for its units.

Chicago Author-Date Referencing Style

It is a requirement of the Curtin Graduate School of Business that all assignments submitted for assessment must be referenced using the Chicago Author-Date Referencing Style. Details of Chicago referencing style can be found online at

<http://library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/chicago.pdf>

Assignments submitted without Chicago Referencing **will not be marked**. It is strongly suggested that students learn and use EndNote software to ensure compliance with the Chicago System. Copies of EndNote are free to all GSB students from here:

<http://startup.curtin.edu.au/software/endnote.cfm> and some Curtin EndNote style downloads and training are available here: <http://library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/endnote.html>

Submission & Return of Assignments

Please ensure you use the unit outline specifics to check that you have addressed all of the criteria before handing in your assignment.

Students may expect the marks and feedback, where appropriate by the end of fifteen (15) working days after submission (unless otherwise negotiated between the lecturer and students).

For an explanation of your grade, please see **Appendix B: Grading System** which explains the marking system used at the GSB.

Please note, as this is an intensive unit all written assignments will require a self addressed A4 envelope attached if you wish it to be returned to you. If you do not provide this envelope with your assignment it will not be returned to you.

Assignments are generally not available for collection from Administration staff.

Late Submission of Assignments

Assignments are expected to be submitted before or on due dates. Only in *critical* circumstances (acute sickness of self or close family – verified by medical certificate), may students negotiate for an extension of time. Please note that heavy employment-related workloads or deadlines will not warrant the granting of an extension. Only one extension will normally be given within this Unit. Reason/s for request for extension must be submitted in writing (postal or email) A MINIMUM OF FOUR (4) DAYS BEFORE THE DUE DATE OF THE ASSIGNMENT. Please note that an extension will not be given for reason of pressure of workload.

In the case of assignments being submitted after the due date, without permission for extension by the lecturer, the assignments will be graded:

- 20% lower if submitted 1 - 7 days late;
- 40% lower if submitted 8 - 14 days late;
- after 14 days, the assignment will **not** be accepted for marking.

GSB STUDENT GUIDEBOOK 2008

Please refer to this publication online for essential information regarding the following:

- GSB Graduate Attributes and Learning Outcomes
- Assessment and Results which includes information on the GSB Grading System, Assessment Guidelines and the Appeals Process.
- The Student Feedback system and Student Representatives (see below).
- Referencing and Malpractice
- Plagiarism
- Ethics
- Emergency Procedures.

Please make sure you obtain a copy of this publication which is found on the **GSB Student Guidebook** available from the **GSB homepage** under **Quick Links**.

Student Representative

A student representative must be elected by the class by the end of the second week of the unit (or second day in the case of an intensive). The student representative is responsible for collecting feedback from the other students and forwarding this to the lecturer and/or unit controller. The student representative also represents the class at the Student - Staff Committee meetings. Once a student representative is elected, the name and contact details should be directed to the Student Academic Advisor. For full details on the student representative role refer to the **GSB Student Guidebook** available from the **GSB homepage** under **Quick Links**.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of all relevant legislation and policies and procedures relating to their rights and responsibilities as a student. These include:

- the Student Charter
- the University's Guiding Ethical Principles
- the University's policy and statements on plagiarism and academic integrity
- copyright principles and responsibilities
- the University's policies on appropriate use of software and computer facilities

Information on all these things is available through the University's "Student Rights and Responsibilities" web page at: <http://students.curtin.edu.au/rights/>

GSB Student Feedback via e-Valuate

Curtin University has introduced a confidential unit specific student feedback system called e-Valuate. This system provides the unit coordinator, lecturer and Head of School with important information about student's learning experiences and the achievement of learning outcomes during their enrolment in this unit. You are strongly encouraged to log onto e-Valuate at the end of this unit and provide your valuable feedback. Further information on how and when to do this will be posted during the trimester.

APPENDIX A: GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

The GSB offers a range of Award Programs in which the students will:

1. Have a thorough foundation of contemporary business theories, concepts and principles and be able to apply these in a group or organisational environment.
2. Create and critically evaluate innovative ideas and strategies within ambiguous and uncertain business environments.
3. Access, evaluate and synthesis diverse information for intelligent business application.
4. Effectively communicate in a manner appropriate to their audience and their desired outcomes.
5. Select and use appropriate technologies and recognise their advantages and limitations.
6. Utilise life-long learning strategies.
7. Recognise and apply international perspectives within the business environment.
8. Appropriately manage and value diversity within a business setting.
9. Apply professional skills – team work, leadership and ethical behaviour.

APPENDIX B: GRADING SYSTEM

The grading in this unit will be consistent with the grading scheme below.

Letter Grade	% Grade	Criteria
A+	90+	Shows a passion for the topic. Student has built on a solid base of deep knowledge and delivered original thought or provided original application of a presented model. Has displayed sound and defensible judgement.
A	80-89	Student has integrated/synthesised a complex body of knowledge. Is able to bring ideas together succinctly. Has displayed sound grounded opinion.
B+	75-79	Critical evaluation or deeper understanding displayed identifies key issues on top of B below; adds value to data or basic research.
B	70-74	Intelligent organisation and expansion of concepts, ideas; illustrates through application; sought other reading if appropriate.
C+	65-69	Covers key issues, on top of C below, in a superior way.
C	60-64	Descriptive, can summarise, organise ideas and present a basic conclusion, internally logical. Presents basic concepts can take a concept and break it into its parts. Provides a basic answer to the question.
D	50-59	Undertaken acceptable amount of work, sticks to the question but disjointed, ideas not linked or not well linked to the foundation of knowledge. Some errors, but not enough to flaw the answer/ argument.
F	<50	Superficial work, insufficient research. Some limited research but has not pulled it together. Doesn't answer the question, errors which flaw the answer, argument; displays significant gaps in foundation knowledge.

Moderation is the process by which fair assessment is assured when there are: multiple markers; one marker assesses a large number of papers; the unit is taught at different campuses; or the assessment is largely subjective. Unit controllers are responsible for ensuring that comparability of assessment is achieved. For further information and/or explanation refer to the Teaching & Learning at Curtin 2008 teaching handbook, Section 5.4, page 41 (<http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/publications/tlbook08.pdf>)

UNIT PLANNER AND STUDY GUIDE

Seminar/ Module	Date	Module	Reading: Ralston B, & Wilson I 2006	Assessment Dates
Day 1	14 August	Introduction Scenarios and Strategy Thinking about the future - overview Principles of the scenario planning process Case study issue	Introduction Part 1	
Day 2	15 August	Scenario use in organisations – You are expected to have read the case study 'Strategic planning at UPS' that has been posted to be prepared to discuss and respond to the questions that accompanied the case study. Thinking biases Trends and key drivers of change Information gathering	Parts 2 and 3	
Day 3	16 August	Scenario planning in organisations – getting started Developing the scenario matrix Scoping the scenarios	Appendix B Part 4	
Day 4	4 Sept	Developing scenario snapshots and end-states Story telling in organisations The scenario writing process	Part 4 cont	Assessment 1 due
Day 5	5 Sept	Scenarios to decisions Keeping the momentum going	Part 5, 6 and Appendix D	
Day 6	6 Sept	Assessment 1 Presentation of Scenario outlines		Assessment 2 Part A due
	26 Sept	No class		Assessment 2 Part B due