



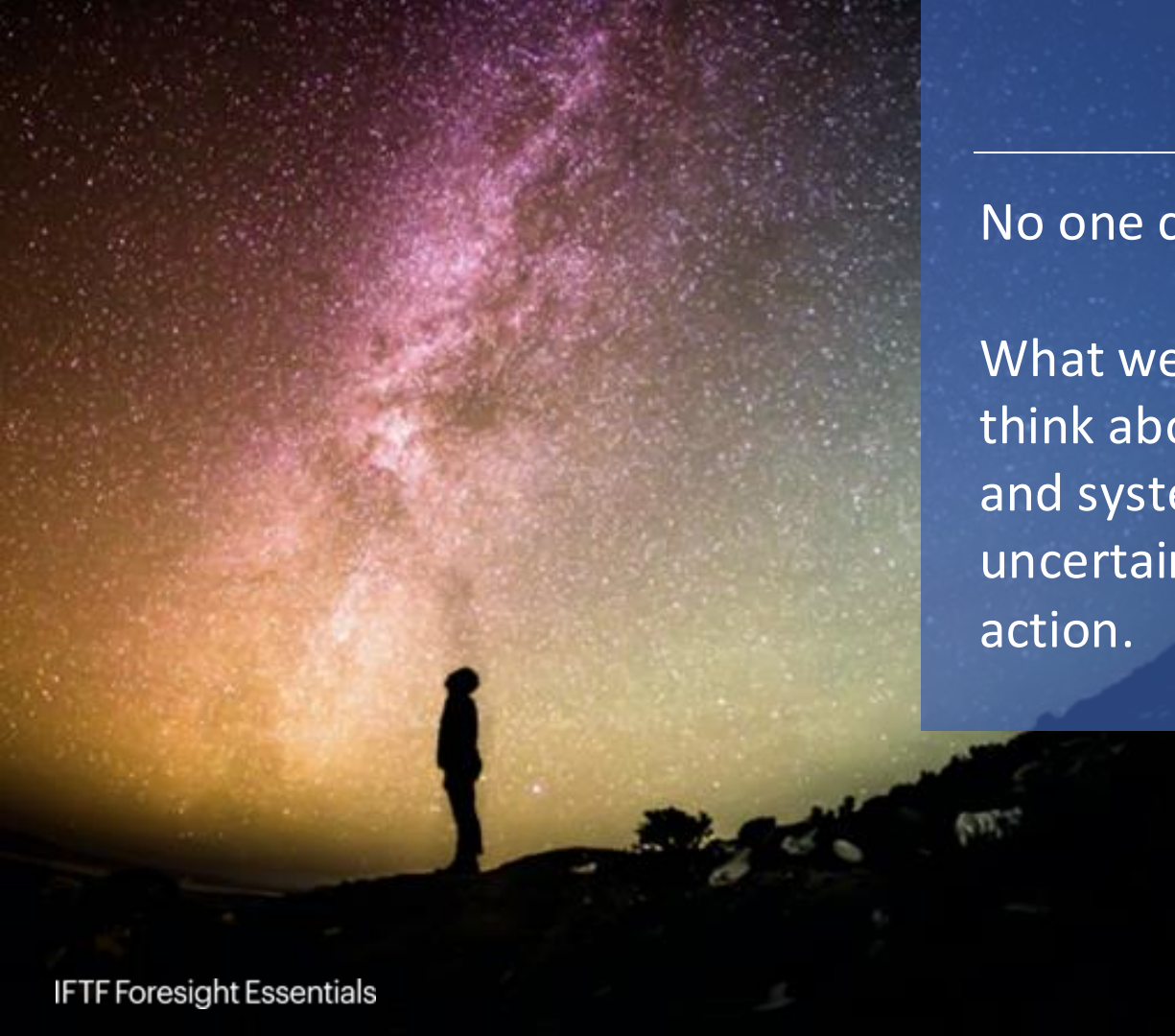
IFTF Foresight Essentials

A Glimpse into the Future: Foresight Fundamentals

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No one can predict the future.

What we can do is learn how to think about the future creatively and systematically, turning uncertainty into inspiration for action.

About IFTF

- An independent, **public interest organization** founded in 1968, based in Silicon Valley.
- Our mission is to help **organizations and leaders become future-ready**.
- We provide practical **tools, research, and programs** that turn foresight into the critical new insights that ultimately lead to transformative action.



IFTF partners include ...



Education for your future. Sisterhood for life.



FORESIGHT

Draw Out Consequences

2nd order consequence

1st order consequence

NT



Strategic Foresight

Strategic foresight is a set of tools, processes and mindsets to inform decision-making under conditions of uncertainty.



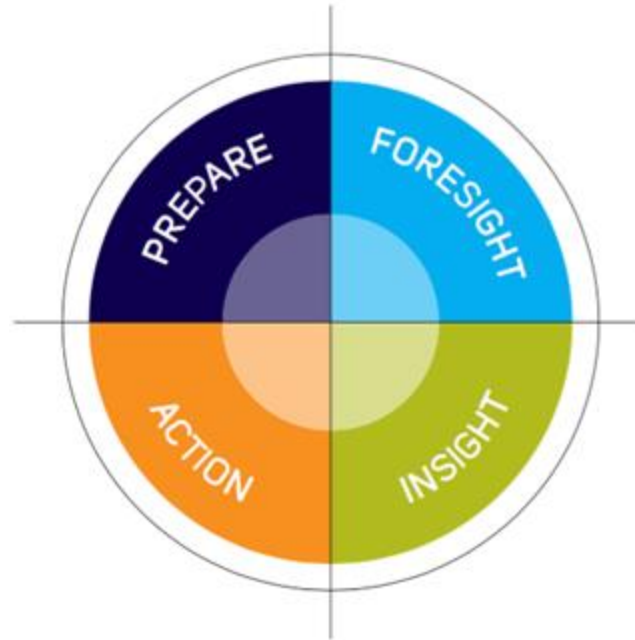
Strategic foresight is useful

Strategic foresight is a set of tools, processes, and mindsets for anticipating the future and making decisions under conditions of **uncertainty**.

- **Challenges assumptions** that current approaches will continue working
- Brings people together to create a **shared systems-level perspective** and sense of urgency about the future
- Anticipates long-term threats and **identify strategic opportunities**
- **Prepares** people and organizations for future possibilities

Strategic foresight is a cycle

1. **Gather** your “building block” evidence—signals and drivers.



2. **Develop** plausible, provocative visions of multiple futures.

3. **Generate** meaningful implications.

4. **Frame** and prioritize possible actions.

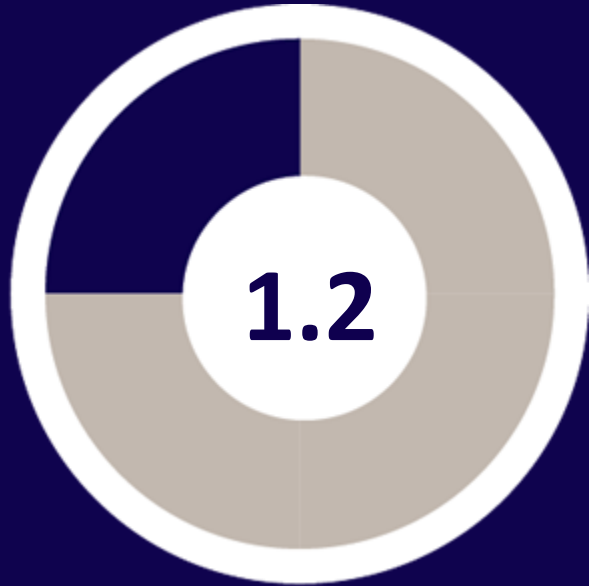
What this can look like



**Tecnológico
de Monterrey**

What this can look like





PREPARE
Find Future Me



PREPARE

FIND FUTURE ME

Our future selves are strangers to us. This isn't just a poetic metaphor; it's a neurological fact. Actively imagining our future selves can make the future feel more urgent, prime our brains to pay closer attention to it, and motivate us to actively shape the future today.

IFTF Foresight Essentials Toolkit



WHY THIS TOOL?

- **Make** abstract futures more specific by remembering your place in them.
- **Reverse** a glitchy behavior in our brains that makes it hard for most people to put significant time into thinking about the far future.
- **Increase** cognitive flexibility and prime the brain to be more open to ways the future will be different.

WHEN TO USE:

- **At the beginning** of a foresight or insight session to place yourself in the future and understand how your life might be different.

FIND FUTURE ME

FUTURE DATE:

YOUR AGE:



Can you imagine one way you might be physically different at this age?

Can you imagine one way your family life might be different? Who might you live with? How have your daily habits changed?

Can you imagine one way you might be a better or stronger version of yourself? Is there a new skill you've learned or improved, or a habit you've changed? Perhaps you've survived or lived through something that will have made you wiser or more resilient?

A person is seen from behind, looking at a futuristic display. The display consists of several glowing, overlapping rectangular frames in a dark space, creating a sense of depth and perspective. The frames are illuminated with a warm, golden light. The background is dark, and the overall atmosphere is one of high-tech and innovation.

Building blocks of foresight

Foresight Fundamentals: Key terms

**Drivers of
change**

+

**Signals of
change**



Forecasts

“**Drivers of change**” are broad, long-term forces that will shape the next decade or more.

- Measured with **quantitative indicators**
- Include both historical and emerging trends, at **different scales and rates of change**
- **Convergence of multiple drivers** creates unexpected outcomes
- Should have a **sense of directionality** and change (i.e. *rising X* or *decline in Y*)
- Often looked at through the lens of **STEEP** (social, technological, economic, environmental, political)



Drivers (STEEEP Framework)

S

SOCIAL

Increase in mental health challenges

Aging population

T

TECHNOLOGICAL

Rapid advances in tools for AI content creation

Rise in number of students using online learning platforms

E

ECONOMIC

Rising cost of living in

Increasing normalization of hustle culture

E

ENVIRONMENTAL

Growing incidence of extreme weather events

Push for the electrification of the energy grid

E

EQUITY

Growing emphasis on racial justice

Increasing wealth inequality in the US

P

POLITICAL

Decreasing trust in institutions

Political polarization between states and regions

Foresight Fundamentals: Key terms

Drivers of
change

+

Signals of
change



Forecasts

“Signals of change” are vivid, eye-opening, real examples about how the world is changing, today

- **Small, local innovations** with the potential to disrupt the status quo
- Provide vivid detail about **new and unexpected** experiences, uses of technology, social interactions, shifting values, business models, etc.
- **Along with drivers, act as evidence and data points** for plausible, provocative forecasts and visions of the future.



Signal

Healthcare-focused high schools to graduate students into jobs

What: Bloomberg Philanthropies plans to create 10 high schools around the country where students can head directly into paid healthcare jobs upon graduation. Curriculum will be designed and delivered through local healthcare and education partners.



Image source: RF_ studio: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/focused-biologist-studying-plant-leaf-with-microscope-3825541/>

Questions for interpreting a signal of change

What are we moving FROM and what are we moving TOWARDS?

If this signal became the norm, how might the future look different?

Signal

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So What: As the call to help students become workforce ready without the burden of student loan debt, expect to see more early college programs and other creative workarounds to get people workforce ready for critical sectors without the need for more years of school.



Signal

Alaska school district modifies calendar to align with harvests

What: In 2022, the Yupiit School District gained state approval to reorganize their school calendar to align with traditional subsistence harvest season. The move, that shortens the school year but extends school days, is an attempt to better allow students to connect with their native cultures and traditions.

So What?

What are we moving FROM and what are we moving TOWARDS?

If this signal became the norm, how might the future look different?



Image source MaryCait Dolan/KYUK

Signal

OSHA fines postal service for inadequate training after heat-related death

What: After a postal worker died due to heat-related causes, OSHA levied a fine for the organization's lack of proper heat-safety training.

So What?

What are we moving FROM and what are we moving TOWARDS?

If this signal became the norm, how might the future look different?



Image source: Shiiko Alexander/Alamy Stock Photo

Foresight Fundamentals: Key terms

Drivers of
change

+

Signals of
change



Forecasts

A forecast is a narrative about the future that provokes insight in the present

- **Plausible, provocative, and informed by data** (Drivers and Signals of Change) from today
- Applied to concepts **at different scales**
- **Can take many forms:** single statements, narrative paragraphs, scenarios, personas, headlines from a future news story, etc.



A forecast example

In 2034, the personal “climate resilience” of employees and students will be a commonly held imperative for responsible, ethical educators.

Schools will provide a comprehensive set of tools and processes to boost employees' and students' healthy responses to eco-despair, temperature inequity, and carbon-positive lifestyles.



Engaging with Foresight Tools

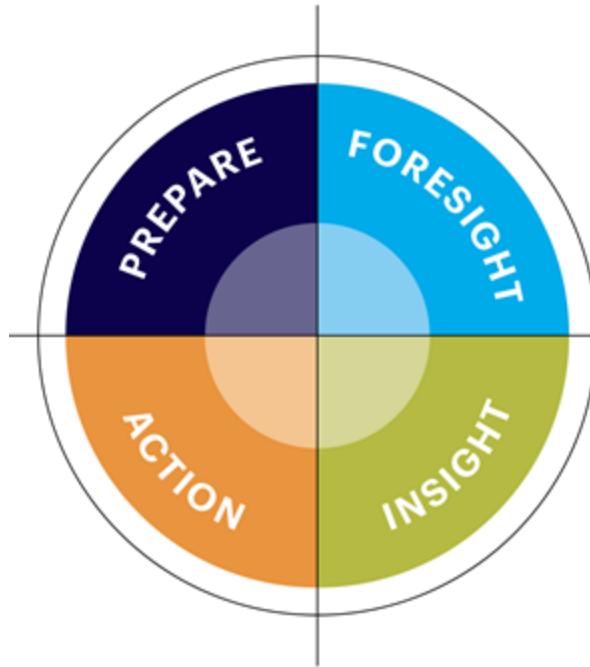
The Foresight Essentials Toolkit

1 | PREPARE

- 1.1 | Orient to the Future
- 1.2 | Find Future Me
- 1.3 | Look Back to Look Forward
- 1.4 | Identify Drivers of Change
- 1.5 | Catalog Signals of Change
- 1.6 | Frame Futures Conversations

4 | ACTION

- 4.1 | Catalyze the Future
- 4.2 | Prioritize Possible Actions
- 4.3 | Validate Your Assumptions
- 4.4 | Build an Action Roadmap
- 4.5 | Rally a Network



2 | FORESIGHT

- 2.1 | Flip the Future
- 2.2 | Reveal Unexpected Possibilities
- 2.3 | Draw Out Consequences
- 2.4 | Draft a Forecast
- 2.5 | Envision Alternative Futures
- 2.6 | Headline the Future
- 2.7 | Personalize the Future
- 2.8 | Create Artifacts from the Future

3 | INSIGHT

- 3.1 | Ride Two Curves
- 3.2 | Map Cross-Impacts
- 3.3 | Build Resilience
- 3.4 | Explore Future Feelings
- 3.5 | Describe Preferred Futures