CAREER SCENARIO PLANNING:

Where will the jobs be? What should I do now?

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The future is unknown and largely unknowable. How can a person plan their career and life in a world that is constantly changing? One technique businesses use is a method called *Scenario Planning.* You think about several possible futures, think about what the world looks like under them, and identify capabilities that will be needed to address them. The same can be applied to your own career, helping you increase your own adaptability and the resilience of the teams you support.

This brief is designed to help you explore three scenario examples that could emerge in the coming years: A Covid-19 World, The Great Recession, and Innovation Reigns. As you explore them, remember: the purpose of scenario planning and this brief is not to perfectly predict the future but be willing to picture good and bad potential futures in ways that increase your adaptability and resilience no matter what tomorrow brings.

Design by Jamie Crites

SEATTLE PACIFIC

OVERVIEW

> A life's work is not a series of stepping-stones onto which we calmly place our feet, but more like an ocean crossing where there is no path, only a heading, a direction, which, of itself, is in conversation with elements.
>
> DAVID WHYTE, CROSSING THE UNKNOWN SEA

A Covid-19 World

A vaccine doesn't arrive right away and is only 70% effective at best as the virus continues to mutate and recur throughout the world. Social distancing must continue, some industries/jobs increase, others are hard hit for the long-term.

The Great Recession

An effective vaccine and treatment arrive but the effects on the economy are long lasting. We enter a deep recession or even a depression. It takes businesses and government 5+ years to recover. Temporary and contract jobs become the norm.

Innovation Reigns

The pandemic has caused people to think in creative ways they never considered before. Innovation and entrepreneurship thrive. Virtual employment is the norm spreading economic growth throughout urban and rural America and into the medium- and low-income countries. The environmental and technological benefits of the pandemic are undeniable and changes the way businesses operate.

On the following pages, the scenarios are described in more detail, including how they may affect the job market, and how you might prepare for them.

Scenario planning gives people pictures of the potential future. But the purpose is not to be totally accurate. It is done to increase a person's or a business' options, their ability to detect signals in the environment, and their ability to adapt when things do change. As you go through these scenarios, think about what you are passionate about and how it might fit into possible futures you see for yourself.

A COVID-19 WORLD

As our understanding of the novel coronavirus continues to evolve and spread, it becomes increasingly clear that societies do not acquire any long-lasting immunity. After initial resistance, social distancing and hyper-vigilant hygiene practices continue as all aspects of life are filtered through a communal health lens. Vaccines are developed but 70% effective and the virus surges in pockets throughout the world. By the time people reach their late 50s and 60s, it is likely they will have been exposed to various strains of the virus, with risk to life increasing as you age. The pandemic has truly become the world's "common enemy," with nations banding together to share research, resources, and best practices. In the United States, the situation necessitates an overhaul of the healthcare system and social services. Some industries/jobs increase, while others are hard hit. Most business—if feasible—has moved online.

INDUSTRIES

- Physical retail
- Airline travel
- Tourism
- Live entertainment
- Sit down restaurants

DECREASING

JOBS

- Small business managers, store clerks
- Pilots, flight attendants, airplane manufacturers
- Hospitality management, tour guides
- Venue-related jobs, entertainers
- Cooks, waiters, small business owners
- Farmers

INDUSTRIES

- Health services, technology, & research
- Psychological services
- Government services (healthcare)
- Shipping & warehousing
- Grocers & food delivery services
- Education & training
- IT, big data

INCREASING

JOBS

- Nurses, doctors, researchers, geriatrics
- Psychologists, therapist, social workers
- Online systems designers, administrators
- Delivery drivers
- Grocers & food handlers
- Teachers, instructional designers
- IT specialist, data analysts, software engineers

Strategies to Flourish

- Conduct informational interviews and grow your network.
- Sharpen your communication skills. Most introductions, networking, and business will be done online via messaging and video conferencing so make sure you are always able to put your best foot forward.
- Think long-term. What 21st century skills* do you bring to the table that, combined with your interests, can be leveraged across multiple jobs?

* 21st Century Skills - Adaptive skills like project management, teamwork, and taking initiative that apply across jobs (see page 5).

THE GREAT RECESSION

After 12-18 months of scientific innovation and cooperation, a successful vaccine is developed and disseminated widely in developed countries, with widespread distribution to developing countries following a year later. People gradually move back into the workplace, staggered by two metrics: level of essentiality and risk of disease spread. However, the economy takes a major hit – national and state government debt is high limiting the help they can provide, and half of restaurants and retail stores never recover. It takes five years after the vaccine for markets to resemble pre-pandemic trends. Travel, live entertainment, and the restaurant industry make somewhat of a comeback, but the memory of the pandemic remains, and most consumers do not spend quite as freely as before. Unemployment remains at 10% and people are more likely to be hired as temporary and contract employees.

INDUSTRIES

- Government services (unemployment)
- Utilities
- Psychological & social services
- Education & training
- Health services
- IT, big data

INCREASING

JOBS

- Online systems designers, administrators
- Psychologists, therapists, social workers
- Teachers, trainers, instructional designers
- Doctors, nurses, geriatric care
- Architects, designers, installers, manufacturing
- IT specialists, data analyst, software engineers
- Grocers, food handlers, organic farming

INDUSTRIES

- Manufacturing & construction
- Tourism & hospitality
- Retail
- Finance

DECREASING

JOBS

- Real estate, construction/manufacturing workers
- Hotels, restaurants, hospitality management
- Small business managers, store clerks
- Investment banking

Strategies to Flourish

- Be strategic. Have a short-term and long-term plan. In the short-term, be realistic about jobs are available and what you are qualified for. Pursue those relentlessly. In the meantime, determine how you can develop and leverage skills that increase future opportunities.

> *Plans are worthless, but planning is everything*
>
> Dwight D. Eisenhower

- Skill-building is critical during periods of recession or unemployment. Make it a priority to become a lifelong learner and use your networks to look for educational opportunities, whether formal or informal (apprenticing, self-taught, certifications_).
- Start financial planning early and often.

INNOVATION REIGNS

While social-distancing measures remain in place to varying degrees as treatments and a vaccine are developed, scientists report that climate change projections have shifted for the better. Indeed, it is impossible to deny how clean the air has become. A new era of innovation and entrepreneurial activity becomes possible across all geographies. Due to the pandemic, individuals demand more virtual work options of their employers, and healthcare and green energy alternatives are new government priorities. Nations struggle but work together better, while the expansion of online work increases job opportunities for all Americans and allows organizations to be more agile and efficient. Some urbanization continues, but with widespread remote work opportunities, there is an increased development and utilization of 21st century skills in rural America and the medium and low-income countries.

INDUSTRIES

- Government services (healthcare)
- Psychological & social services
- Education & training
- Health services
- Green energy
- IT, big data
- Grocers & specialty food stores

INCREASING

JOBS

- Online systems designers, administrators
- Psychologists, therapists, social workers
- Teachers, instructional designers
- Doctors, nurses, geriatric care
- Architects, installers, manufacturing
- IT specialists, data analyst, software engineers
- Grocers, food handlers, organic farming

INDUSTRIES

- Non-green manufacturing & construction
- Airline travel
- Coal & oil mining
- Commercial real estate

DECREASING

JOBS

- Machinery, component manufactures
- Pilots, flight attendants, airplane manufacturers
- Miners
- Real-estate agents, mortgage lenders

A ship in port is safe; but that is not what ships are built for

-Rear Admiral Grace Hopper

Strategies to Flourish

- Think like a futurist. Be aware of current events and trends to stay attuned to drivers of change and the opportunities that may follow.
- Take initiative when opportunities arise–or better yet–create your own opportunities.
- Be adaptable and consistently learn new skills. In a world with constantly evolving opportunity, the more you can keep up or stay ahead of change, the better.

WHAT NOW?

So, what's a person to do given all of these unknowns? Fortunately, there are some simple next steps that are applicable no matter what the world brings. Below are some of the ways to position yourself for all three future scenarios.

Conduct informational interviews. Lots of people are at home these days so virtual informational interviews are now maybe easier than they have ever been. To start, find people through your career center or professors or via LinkedIn. Send them an email and ask for 30 minutes – don't go longer! For the content, ask them about how they got into their jobs and advice they would have for you. Do a Google search for informational interviewing to get more sample questions. When you are done, make sure you send a thank you note or email. Mention something *specific* you took away from the conversation. Never ask for a job – just collect information from them. You might be nervous to bother people, but they might be very excited to do this – it's a way for them to support other people while staying at home.

Think short-term and long-term. In the short-term, be realistic about what jobs are available and what you are qualified for. Be willing to take a job outside your chosen field for a while. Whatever job you have, look for ways you can develop skills that will be useful in future opportunities.

Focus on 21st Century skillsets that can go anywhere. Look for ways to develop skills that will make you more adaptable and successful in any future jobs. Some of these skills might include:

- Project management. Are you able and willing to take a project on and lead others to see it to completion when others aren't cooperative? Can you build a structure and process that helps drive the work forward and makes everyone successful?
- Taking initiative. Do you wait for someone to tell you what to do or do you recognize what needs doing and execute? Do you come with problems or do you bring proposed solutions, even if they aren't perfect? How can you anticipate what your boss and the organization need?
- Teamwork. Do other people say you are a good teammate? Are you a catalyst? Do you make other people better?
- Be a life-long learner. Whether that means furthering formal education (degrees, certificates), taking advantage of trainings, or teaching yourself, constantly learning new skills allows you to "level up" and adapt to change throughout the course of your career.

TO LEARN MORE

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FOR DISCUSSION

1. Scenario Planning. For each scenario, what other details can I imagine about this world?
    a. What other industries and jobs might become more critical? Less critical or obsolete?

2. What are my professional goals and how to do they fit into this world?
    a. What might the jobs in my chosen industry look like?
    b. What skills would be critical for me to possess?

3. Considering my answers to the first two questions, how do I leverage my passions and skills to successfully navigate the reality of this world?
    a. Create a roadmap for yourself of how you would get to where you want to be. The more detail the better.
    b. What are some jobs I might take short-term that aren't a perfect match but will prepare me for future jobs?