



Scenario Incasting

Duration: 60 minutes

Group size: small groups of 5-8 people

Scenario incasting takes people on a comparative journey across several possible futures. – Wendy Schultz

Purpose

Incasting is a foresight technique for elaborating preset scenarios. It pushes participants to consider how their life would change in a variety of alternative possible futures. This exercise asks people to accept the possibility that the future may be very different in many ways.

Outputs

- Expanded notions of possible change and its impact
- Awareness of how life would differ across a broad range of possible conditions

Preparation

- Print copies of the Future Church scenarios for each participant
- Assign one scenario to each small group. Try to create small groups no smaller than 4 and no larger than 8 persons. Set up the room accordingly.

Materials:

- √ Future Church scenarios
- √ Flip charts
- √ Colored markers

Guidelines

Imagine waking up to find yourself in a future 10-15 years hence. The question is NOT how did this happen but rather how can we adapt and thrive in these conditions. Using the general scenario description you have been assigned, expand and add details regarding what your world would be like in this prescribed future. What would the following be like for you?

- **Home**
- **Commuting** to work, transportation

- **Working**
 - **Family life**
 - **Health care**
 - **Leisure** activities, entertainment [what do people do for fun?]
 - **Education** [what skills or substantive knowledge do people need most, how is that passed from one generation to the next?]
 - **Government**
 - **Crimes** [what would be illegal given the values and perspectives of this future?]
- Exceed the boundaries of the present wherever it seems plausible given the context of the scenario: your suggestions only need to be logically consistent with the assumptions of the scenario.
 - Each group should designate a person to act as the recorder and capture the group's work.
 - When the full group reassembles, **Report your results as 7 news headlines (covering the 9 categories above), with subheads and the first paragraph of the story (the lead).**
 - Use the news media appropriate to this future [and tell us how news gets disseminated].
 - Imagine what political controversies, international events, critical issues, awards, celebrations, sports events, and other newsworthy items might occur in this future.
 - Take details to their logical, if extreme, conclusions: some traditional activities, offices, organizations, and lifestyles may disappear entirely in your scenario; others may be transformed, existing in this future in an entirely new form; and entirely new offices, services, businesses, schools, and activities may arise.
 - The only rule is consistency with the internal logic and conditions of the scenario.

Adapted from: Schultz, Wendy. SCENARIO INCASTING: Exploring Possible Alternative Futures.
<http://www.infinitefutures.com/tools.shtml>.

Tips for facilitating group activities

- Consider changing the usual meeting environment to stimulate creative thinking.
- Keep the end goal of decisive action in mind for the duration of the activity.
- Open with a brief overview of the activity so participants know what to expect.
- Be careful and consistent to maintain pre-set boundaries of time and task.
- Encourage small group self-management; suggest that each group select a recorder, a reporter, a time keeper, and a discussion leader.
- Work with the people, ideas, and motivations you have to find enough common ground to act rather than being bogged down or sidetracked with an attempt to resolve "deeper issues".

- Seek global perspective on issues by allowing all opinions to be expressed, validating polarities, and by agreeing to disagree on issues that cannot be resolved quickly.
- Encourage people to stay engaged in spite of differences. Resist the urge to intervene unless you observe movement toward 'fight or flight'. Allow the group to resolve its own differences or agree to set them aside.
- Provide plenty of easily available nutritious snacks and beverages
- Consider using a Church Futures consultant to add depth and breadth of experience.

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