



TriMetrix®HD Futuristic Thinking

Futuristic Thinking

Imagining, envisioning, projecting and/or predicting what has not been realized yet.

Why is this skill important?

A person who has good Futuristic Thinking skills can mentally role-play the execution of a long-range plan and make accurate predictions concerning possible outcomes. These people have the uncanny ability to solve problems in ways that others' couldn't even have thought of. In simpler terms, good Futuristic Thinking skills allow you to see the big picture, helping you to determine which direction to take.

Imagining and/or predicting changes in current reality seems to come naturally to some people. Many leaders who are good Futuristic Thinkers are curious and flexible, focused on the future, have a positive outlook, and are open to new ideas in a variety of ways.

Why is all of this important? Think about it this way. You will never be able to achieve your long-term goals if you can't visualize them and act toward them in a reasonable, effective manner. Perhaps even more important at this moment, good Futuristic Thinking skills will help you be taken seriously in managerial roles and help your company achieve its goals. If you help your company achieve its goals, you are proving your own value again and again, and you'll be much more likely to be trusted with important projects and gain opportunities for advancement.

What are skills associated with Futuristic Thinking?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Futuristic Thinking:

- Demonstrates an ability to connect the dots and see the big picture.
- Observes and analyzes the forces driving current reality that may have long-term effects.
- Utilizes foresight and intuitive perception as well as factual events to draw inferences.
- Recognizes, supports and/or champions progressive ideas.
- Anticipates future trends or events.
- Envisions possibilities others may not.
- Imagines and/or predicts changes in current reality, based on deductive and conceptual reasoning.

- Challenge the assumptions and beliefs inherent in your thought processes. Don't just keep doing something because it traditionally has been done that way. Rather, challenge the way it has always been done and seek a better or more efficient way to do it. Consider what else is possible.
- Write down any and all ideas you have for improvement even if they seem far-fetched or difficult to achieve.
- Read industry publications and attend trade shows or conferences to stay abreast of current thinking in the field. Try to incorporate what you learn into your daily job.
- Always be on the lookout for new ideas and new approaches. Be educated about and open to trying novel technologies or processes.
- Review projects after they are complete to determine what contributed to success and what contributed to failures or problems. Keep developing your strengths and work to improve the areas that have caused failures or problems.
- Look at your own functional area from a strategic perspective. What are your group's particular strengths and weaknesses? What external organizations or factors affect the activity in your functional area?
- Perform a risk analysis by thinking about what could go wrong in your functional area. Develop plans for these what-if scenarios.
- Operate from a broad, long-term perspective. Don't just think about how your actions affect the short-term, but think big!
- When you find a strategic opportunity, plan your approach in detail, including time, finances and human resources.
- Develop several options for each difficult problem or new opportunity you face, evaluate them objectively, and then act on the best possible option.
- Force yourself to think long-term. Envision how the decision you are making today will affect other activities and decisions down the road.
- Brainstorm! • Ask yourself a series of what-if questions when you are making plans or decisions. What does this mean in one week? One month? Three months? A year?
- Assume a long horizon even if you can only see a short one.
- Plan scenarios for high-potential, future situations.
- Capture the 30,000-foot view. What do you see if you step back and look at your projects from a big-picture perspective?
- Develop a crisis plan. Try to think of the worst possible situations and brainstorm solutions or management plans.

Futuristic Thinking

Activities

Activity 1: Brainstorming

A big part of Futuristic Thinking is taking time to anticipate potential changes or future possibilities. Take some time to think about the questions below. You don't have to be right about your ideas, but the important thing is that you are considering future possibilities.

What are some potential organizational changes that might happen? Is someone disgruntled and may choose to leave? Is someone clearly being groomed for management? Is there a department that might merge with another?

Make a list of your three most important projects right now. What are three potential problems that could occur on each project? What could you do to avoid them or prepare for them?

Project 1 _____

Potential Problems:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Solutions to Avoid Potential Problems:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Project 2

Potential Problems:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Solutions to Avoid Potential Problems:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Project 3

Potential Problems:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Solutions to Avoid Potential Problems:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity 2: Hindsight 20/20

Think about a time in the past that you failed to anticipate a problem with a project, a delay reaching a goal, a personality conflict, etc.

What could you have done to envision that event? _____

What could you have done to avoid the problem? _____

How can you incorporate what you learned from that experience into your daily life? _____

Activity 3: Strategic Opportunities

Identify key strategic opportunities that are possible for your organization. After you complete the following questions, decide what strategies will be most effective and develop action plans for all stakeholders.

Who are the internal customers or people within the organization that we must support or work with? _____

What do our internal customers need or request from us?

Who are our external customers: clients, suppliers, others outside our organization?

What do our external customers need or request from us?

What external trends may shape our customers' needs and wants in the future?

How can we learn more about those upcoming trends?

What products or services do we offer to meet the needs of our customers?

What can we develop to accommodate them?

What are our competitors doing to meet those needs?

How can we find out more about what is going on in our industry or market?

What can we do to stand out positively from the competition?

What are our unique qualifications?

What can we do with and for our customers and suppliers that will have the best possibility of helping us meet our goals?

Activity 4: Recommendations

If your best friend came to you and asked your advice on improving Futuristic Thinking skills, what four things would you tell him/her to do?

1.

2.

3.

4.
