

# Futuring: A new strategic visioning and planning tool

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## Why futuring? Today's goals:

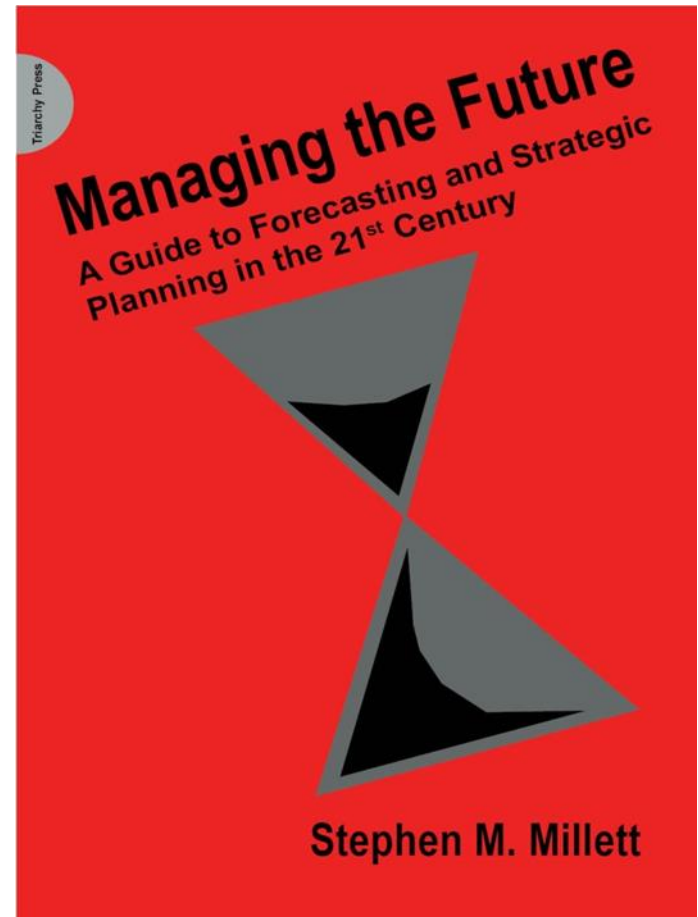
- 1) Discover the benefits and rationale for using futuring as a strategic tool for visioning and planning
- 2) Learn the fundamental principles and practices related to strategic foresight (futuring and visioning)
- 3) Learn how to identify future trends and issues and use these to construct possible alternative futures (scenarios)
- 4) Discuss assets that Extension may employ to address the future needs
- 5) Discuss ways to utilize the information gained today with your groups, organizations and communities



## Leaders as Futurists

Leaders in the future will need to become futurists - just as they had to learn to become their own strategic planners.

Leaders need an understanding of the principles and best practices of strategic foresight (using futuring and visioning) to support visionary leadership.



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## Futuring & Visioning: Different but complementary processes

- Futuring includes both quantitative and qualitative forecasting of trends and potential changes external to us, and largely out of our control
- Visioning is an ability to imagine a desired future and how to make it happen (goals and strategies)
- Visioning without any regard to the external world (futuring) can be little more than wishful thinking





**Futuring Associates LLC**  
Strategic Planning and Innovation Services

**FUTURING**

External to Internal



**Global and National Trends**

**Market and Customer Trends**

**Specific Opportunities**



**Actions**

**Strategies, Plans, and Investments**

**Capabilities, Technologies, and Assets**

**Mission, Values, Goals, and Culture**



**VISIONING**

Internal to External



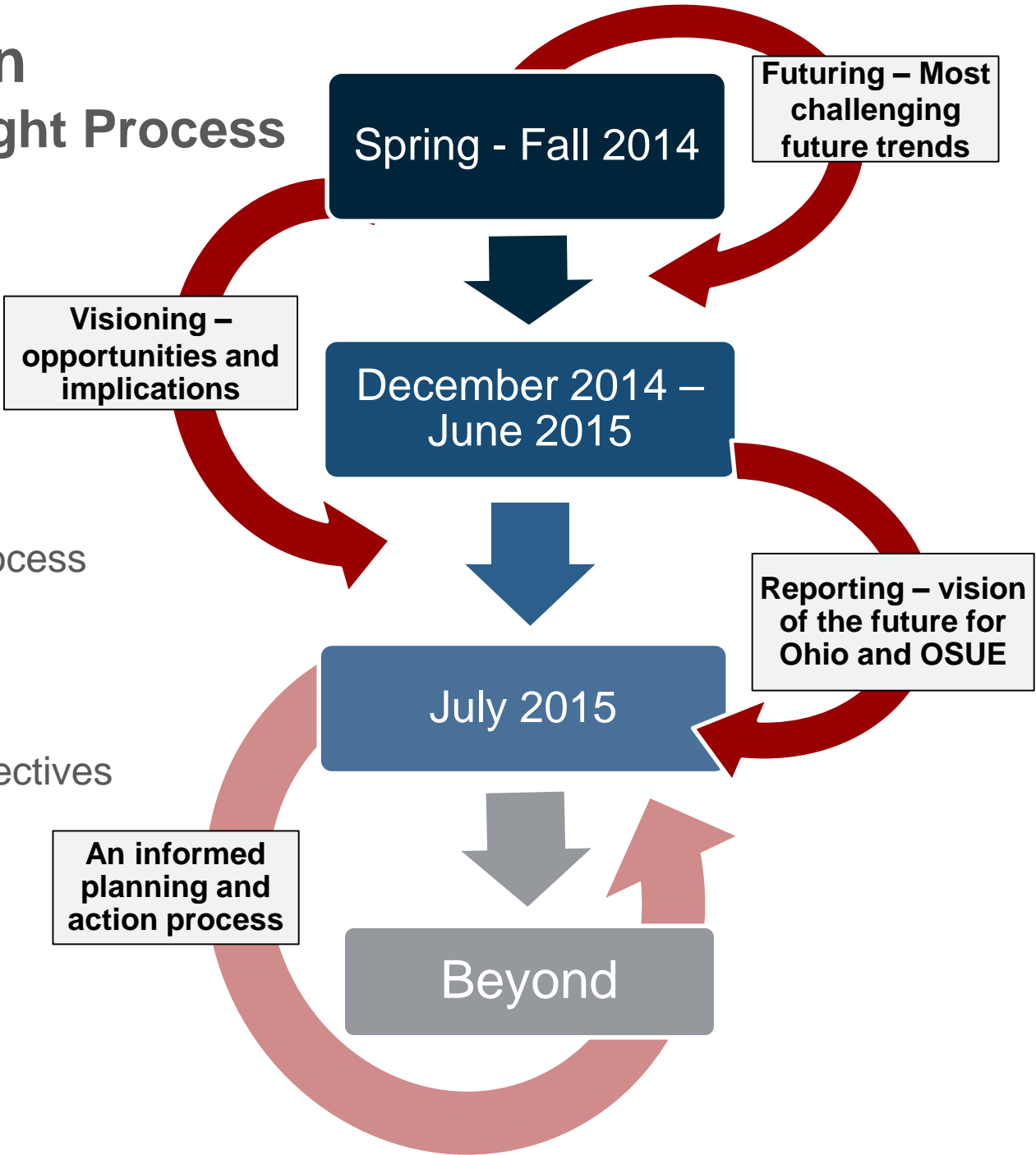
# Elements of a Futuring Project

- Identification of project goals and resources
- Topic question
  - *What will be the most challenging trends and issues for Ohioans by the year 2035, and what are the best opportunities to leverage the strengths of the University and OSU Extension to address those issues?*
- Selection of trends, issues and factors: **Descriptors**
- Research into trends, issues and factors: **Trend Research Papers**
- Interactions among trends, issues, and factors: **Scenario Development**
- Forecasts: projections, potential changes, expectations, and stories (single or multiple): **Scenarios – Alternative Futures**
- Context for strategic planning, investments, new products and services, etc: **Strategic Visioning**

# VP Conversation

## A Strategic Foresight Process

Discovery and learning  
Engaged, open-thinking process  
Stakeholder engagement  
Discourse and dialogue  
Internal and external perspectives



# Alternative Futures: Scenarios - 2035



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[go.osu.edu/3futures](http://go.osu.edu/3futures)



## What We Learned – Most Compelling Trends

- Alignment of Skills with Job Needs
- Economic/Employment Growth
- Food Production, Safety, Security
- Health and Wellness
- Social, Economic, and Political Differences
- Technology Change and Adaptation



# Identifying Assets Extension Can Employ

Consider all of the scenarios.

What will the people, families, businesses, youth, community leaders, governments, and communities need in these potential futures?

## Identifying Assets Extension Can Employ

1. How is this ideal organization providing solutions for the people of 2035?
2. What are the solutions?
3. What opportunities are we taking advantage of or creating?

Don't allow yourself to be limited at this point.



## Identifying Assets Extension Can Employ

What do we need to do to become this organization?

i.e., based on what you identified, what are the implications for Extension's financial model, staffing/personnel, program scope, structure, mission, etc?

## What We Learned

- The people of 2035 will need:
  - Leadership and decision-making skills, including communication and life skills
  - Ideas to help with enterprise and innovation
  - A well-trained workforce, including ever-evolving training programs for skill development
  - Information for sustainable, health-focused food and lifestyle choices
  - Info to become good consumers of information



## What We Learned: Implication for Extension

- Funding:
  - Various funding models in operation; less reliance on traditional funding models
  - Collaboration with public and private entities
  - Creativity reigns



## What We Learned: Implication for Extension

- Education & Research:
  - Research-based info; measurable, well-communicated, impact-driven results
  - Partnerships with public and private collaborators
  - Access to university-wide knowledge and research
  - Use of cutting-edge technology
  - Helping individuals navigate and evaluate the vast ocean of available information
  - Incorporating health info and impacts into educational programs



## What We Learned: Implication for Extension

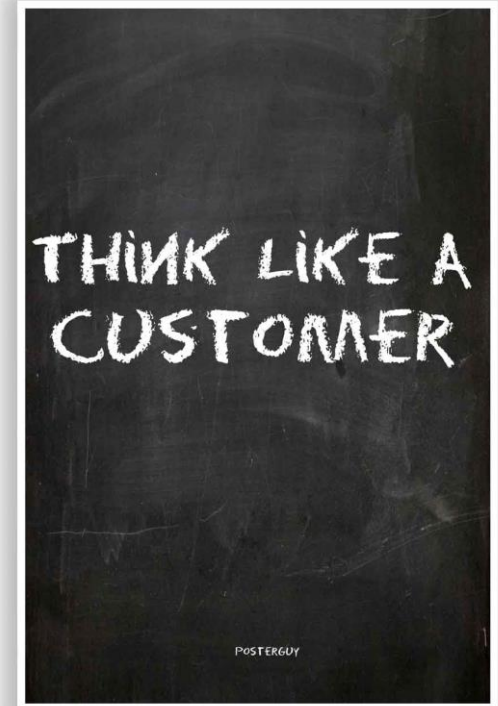
- Workforce:
  - Employees based regionally or beyond state boundaries
  - Utilizing virtual and mobile technology for educational communication
  - Not limited to four program areas
  - Continuous education/skill development





# Applications of Futuring and Visioning

- Anticipate changing customers, clients, market conditions, and competitors
- Envision new products and services
- Provide thought leadership
- Change corporate culture
- Exercise risk management (managing uncertainty)
- Perform strategic planning
- Provide foundation for visionary leadership



# Applying to your own situation

- Abbreviated exercise guide will be available
- Visit URLs on the project overview handout for video and materials you can adapt

## Vice President's Conversation on the Future: Descriptors for Trend Research

Complementing other future-focused initiatives in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, the VP Conversation is a strategic foresight project focused on developing well-considered expectations for the future that will inform a vision for OSU Extension, leading the organization into the next century.

A key step for the VP Conversation project is using expert judgment to identify the most challenging trends and issues, referred to as descriptors, for Ohioans over the next 20 years. These descriptors represent the most pressing challenges and opportunities that should be considered as we begin to think about the long-term future of OSU Extension.

These descriptors will be studied and research summaries written to further articulate the issues and implications for the future. This information will help paint a picture of possible futures in Ohio that will inform our conversations about OSU Extension's role.

More than 500 people contributed ideas in the participatory approach, designed to engage a wide array of stakeholders in discussions about the future. Asking the question "What will be the most challenging trends and issues for Ohioans by the year 2035?", we gathered input through:

- Dialogue Sessions: 40 small groups, 350+ individuals, 1,151 ideas.
- Interviews with key stakeholders.
- Survey of Stakeholders: 110 respondents (approximately 50% non-OSU).
- Forum on August 5<sup>th</sup> with elected officials, community leaders, industry experts, and futurists.

An analysis team used data from all these sources, supported by existing information on trends, to develop the 17 descriptors and definitions below.

### 17 Key Trends and Issues for Ohioans by 2035

#### **Alignment of Employee Skills with Job Needs**

Trends in the changing nature of work and the workforce in Ohio; specifically related to the extent that the training and skill base of people seeking jobs fit the changing needs for jobs in Ohio industries and businesses (e.g., agriculture and manufacturing).

#### **Climate Change**

Trends in global climate change and resulting impacts (e.g., weather, seasons).

#### **Crime and Terrorism**

Trends in crime rates, acts of terrorism affecting Ohio, prevention, and emergency preparedness.

#### **Economic and Employment Growth**

Trends in the economic growth in Ohio, increase or decrease in number and types of jobs, unemployment rates; research and development; influence of costs, technology, and regulations on the way business/industry function; global economy; encompasses the breadth of Ohio industries and businesses (e.g., agriculture and manufacturing); inflation; consumer confidence; household debt; wage structures; personal income.

#### **Educational Access, Attainment, and Cost**

Trends in access, delivery, attainment, and costs of education; demand for education; gaps in education levels; lifelong learning; student debt for post-secondary education; participation in higher education and other post-secondary institutions.



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# QUESTIONS?

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