

FORCE FIELD SCENARIO PLANNING

Question: _____

How answer might guide future action: _____

Prepared By: _____

Date: _____

Background: This approach is intended to qualitatively explore possible future trends and outcome states relevant to a decision (as opposed to providing point estimates or quantitative projections). The Force Field Scenario Planning is a learning tool that permits examination of alternative actions that might be taken, given different future states.*

DIRECTIONS:

1. State question, usually suitable for a “yes” or “no” answer. Answer should be relevant to a present or future decision. For example, the question “Will fuel costs in the near future increase to the point where the design of personal cars must change drastically?” The answer might guide the purchase of hybrid vehicles or investing in alternative power sources, such as hydrogen or fuel cell devices.
2. Identify and list the forces, trends, or expected changes that would work in favor of a “Yes” outcome, and list these under “Driving Forces.” Similarly, identify and list restraining forces, things that might work against a “yes” outcome. In the car example, driving forces might include diminishing oil supplies, urban overcrowding and pollution controls, rising production costs, etc. and restraining forces might include increases in combustion engine efficiency, reductions in vehicle weight through use of new materials, etc. After listing driving and restraining forces, rank items on each side as to overall strength.

<u>DRIVING FORCES</u>	<u>RESTRAINING FORCES</u>

3. Next, identify and list any critical uncertainties. These are uncertain but pivotal or “trigger” events or developments that could dramatically alter the balance of forces, and estimate the odds of occurrence (as a percent). In the automotive example, these could include development of cheap, super efficient fuel cells and storage batteries, new technologies for finding crude oil deposits, or dramatic breakthroughs in power sources, such as “desktop fusion” or zero point energy.

<u>CRITICAL UNCERTAINTIES</u>	<u>ESTIMATED PROBABILITIES</u>

4. Lastly, develop at least two (2) alternative scenarios about the expected future. One scenario should be appropriate for a “Yes” decision, and one for a “No.” Summarize each scenario by:
 - Showing a rough timeline of events that might unfold
 - Telling a brief story about what happens within that scenario
 - Stating what actions would be most prudent to take in coping with that scenario
 - Indicating which scenario is believed to be most likely

*Scenario terminology adapted from Peter Schwartz, *The Art of The Long View*, Currency Paperback, New York, 1996.