

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

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- What do I know?
- How do I know what I know?
- What don't I know?
- How do I discover what I need to know?



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Environmental scanning is a critical factor in visioning, and directing your future. Scanning involves both looking for information (searching for changes and innovations) and looking at information (analysis and trends).

Foresight, the ability to predict and plan for the future: Generally, environmental scanning is thought of in terms of external scanning, looking to the outside. However, when aligned with internal scanning (reflection) the two can be combined for a powerful tool for developing foresight (vision).

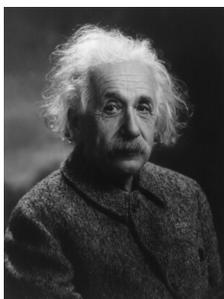
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Environmental scanning can help you analyze, consider options and take action.

Environmental scanning is like a continual research and development process. Such an R&D process strategically implemented can leverage information, sensing of emerging trends, personal passion and talent to inform decision making.

Environmental scanning can help you become aware of, and responsive to changing conditions and adapt accordingly.

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“You can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used to create them.”

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Solving problems we didn't know we had.

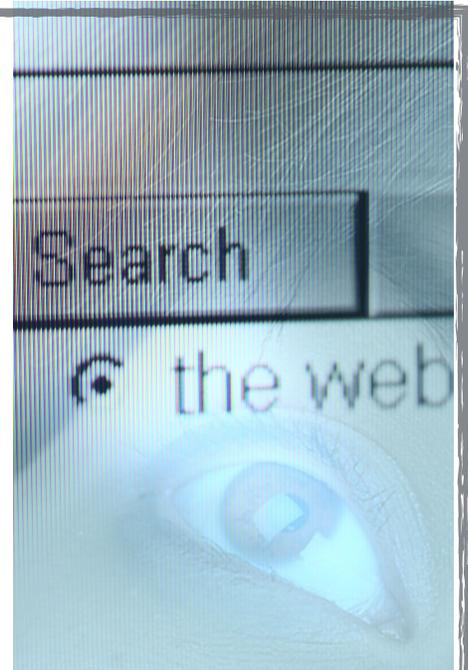


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Changemaker

“Creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value.” (Sir Ken Robinson)

Purpose is powerful and environmental scanning can help you vision a purposeful future.

- 1) **Formal analytical:** the scanning process is more of a project-based process culminating in a report by a given date. This process might be conducted at regular intervals such as every three or five years and might last a few weeks or months.
- 2) **Social intuitive:** everyone scans the environment for useful information as an ongoing process. This might be considered a less rigorous approach. However, ***it is the preferred process of founders of successful startup ventures. They do a lot of networking and are naturally inclined to ask questions and generate opinions on what the future holds.***



FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

Omnidirectional scanning involves searching for and viewing information with no specific need in mind. The goal is to scan broadly in order to detect signals of change early. As a result you become sensitive to selected areas or issues.

Unidirectional scanning is focused on a selected topic(s). The goal is to evaluate the significance of the information in order to evaluate the impact it may have upon the organization.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

SCANNING MODE	INFORMATION NEED	INFORMATION USE	AMOUNT OF TARGETED EFFORT	NUMBER OF SOURCES	TACTICS
OMNI-DIRECTIONAL Undirected Viewing	General areas of interest; specific need to be revealed	Serendipitous discovery "Sensing"	Minimal	Many	Scan broadly a diversity of sources, taking advantage of what's easily available "Touring"
UNI-DIRECTIONAL Conditioned Viewing	Able to recognize topics of interest	Increase understanding "Sensemaking"	Low	Few	Browse in pre-selected sources on pre-specified topics of interest "Tracking"
INFORMAL SEARCH	Able to formulate queries, investigate based upon broader interests/topics/trends/innovations	Increased and deeper knowledge within narrow limits "Learning"	Medium	Few	Search is focused on an issue or event, but a good enough search is satisfactory "Satisficing"
FORMAL SEARCH	Able to specify targets in more clearly defined search for reliable primary source information	Looking for specific information or Information about a specific issue for planning, acting "Deciding"	High	Many	Systematic gathering of information on a target, following some method or procedure "Retrieving"

Adapted from *The Art of Scanning the Environment* by Chun Wei Choo (1999)