

Take Charge of the Future: Using the Power of Scenarios to Drive Strategy and Performance

Arden Brummell

FriesenPress

(250pp)

978-1-03-915601-2

Drawing on decades of experience, the informative strategic business guide Take Charge of the Future suggests methods for effective decision-making.

Arden Brummell's robust business guide *Take Charge of the Future* encourages people to have strategic conversations that result in better decisions and improved performances.

The book's four parts discuss integration and differentiation; scenario development focused on real issues; strategy development based on identified scenarios; and strategy implementation, as well as monitoring and adjusting to ensure the process's success. Each section is organized with clarity. For example, scenario development is broken down into five steps that include creating focused and relevant scenarios, identifying the forces that drive the scenarios, and developing critical uncertainties that could influence future outcomes. Other covered processes include the evaluation and improvement of strategies, the development of business ideas, and the process of ensuring that imagined scenarios are relevant.

Well-labeled, straightforward diagrams complement the book's suggestions; these visual illustrations of the components that make up each process ably show how the book's various points are linked to one other. There are also diagrams that summarize the suggested processes, making them easier to follow. And a diagram that highlights the key elements of a basic strategic planning model and a graph that shows how uncertainty influences a system's complexity are further helpful additions.

When explaining the scenario development process, the book assumes a workshop environment wherein a facilitator seeks the input of their participants, encouraging them to identify future key uncertainties and develop objective stories that imagine how that future could turn out. The approach is used throughout the text; it demonstrates particular methods of executing its scenarios-to-strategy process. Interactive and encouraging, it may prompt the audience to implement the book's information now.

Thought-provoking and inspiring, the book employs formal language when explaining its concepts, techniques, and processes of scenario planning. Its discussions are plain, direct, and make appropriate use of technical terms for its primary audience of business and organizational leaders. And interspersed with discussions about the development and implementation of the scenarios-to-strategy framework are detailed anecdotes drawn from Brummell's career. He references his work with Shell Canada, where he was tasked with monitoring the social trends that could influence the company's macro environment. Other case studies model developing scenarios and executing other referenced processes, resulting in a sense of real-life applicability.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (February 28, 2023)

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