

The Disruption Map Exercise

be radical.

90-120

minutes
focused time

3-5

diverse
participants
per group

Markers, Post-
its, flip charts
or large sheets
of paper

Objectives

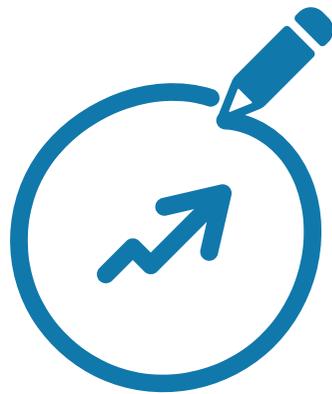
- » Explore possible long-term implications of emerging trends & developments.
- » Identify dynamics, relationships & dependencies in an uncertain and complex environment.
- » Anticipate unintended consequences, future threats or opportunities & possible points of intervention or influence.

Overview

A Disruption Map (MAP: Multiple Alternative Perspectives), also referred to as an Implications Wheel, is used to organize thoughts about a likely future development or trend. With it, possible long-term implications (positive and negative) can be identified in a structured way. It helps participants think more deeply and systematically about the dynamics of disruption – anticipating future implications, exploring unintended consequences & revealing future opportunities and threats to your business.

Step 1

Identify the likely change or trend



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Exercise**

**10
min**

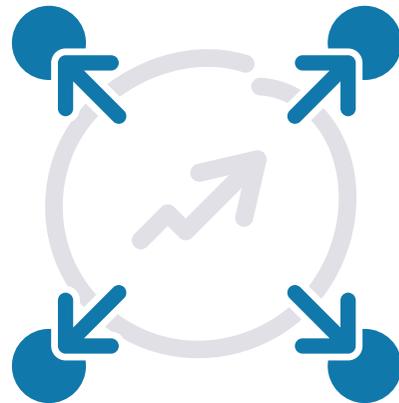
be radical.

Facilitation

Ask each group to define a likely change or trend to explore. Give the groups 2 minutes to brainstorm and encourage them to choose something big enough to have significant potential implications but specific enough to be mapped on the provided paper (e.g., “world hunger” is a too broad). A good starting point is to take a change or trend and combine it with a use-case (e.g. “AI in Customer Service”). Have each group write the central idea in the middle of a piece of paper, or on a flip-chart. Invite a few groups to share the idea they have chosen by giving a description of the issue, goal or change that will be studied.

Step 2

Explore likely implications, first-order consequences



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15
min

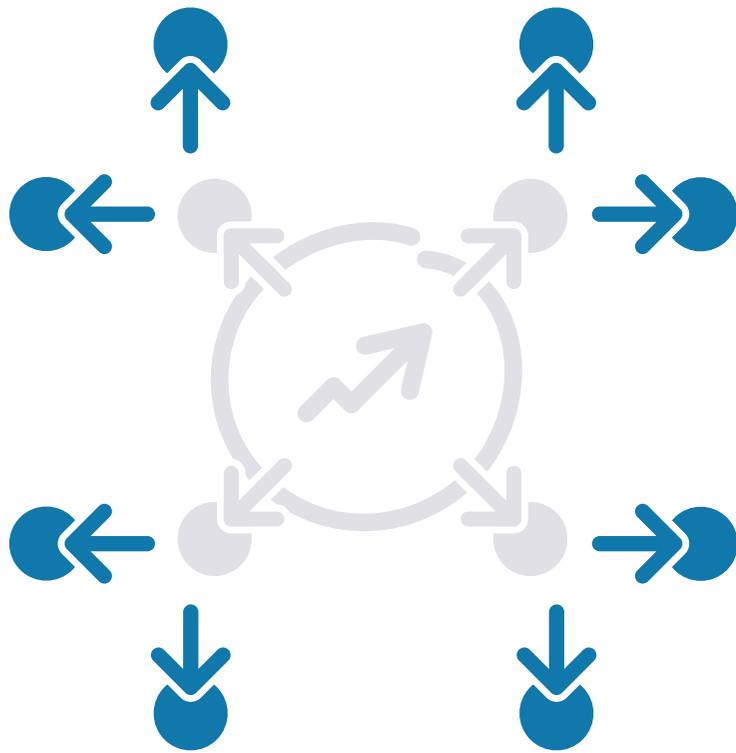
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Facilitation

Have the groups brainstorm four to six possible direct consequences of that change. Good questions to ask are: What is likely to happen next? How would my [our] life change? What would we need to decide? Who are the early adopters? What are the initial use cases? Ask the groups to take each consequence, and connect it from the central idea, like the beginning of a mind map. These are "first-order" consequences. If there is time, ask the groups to share out.

Step 3

Identify indirect, second-order consequences



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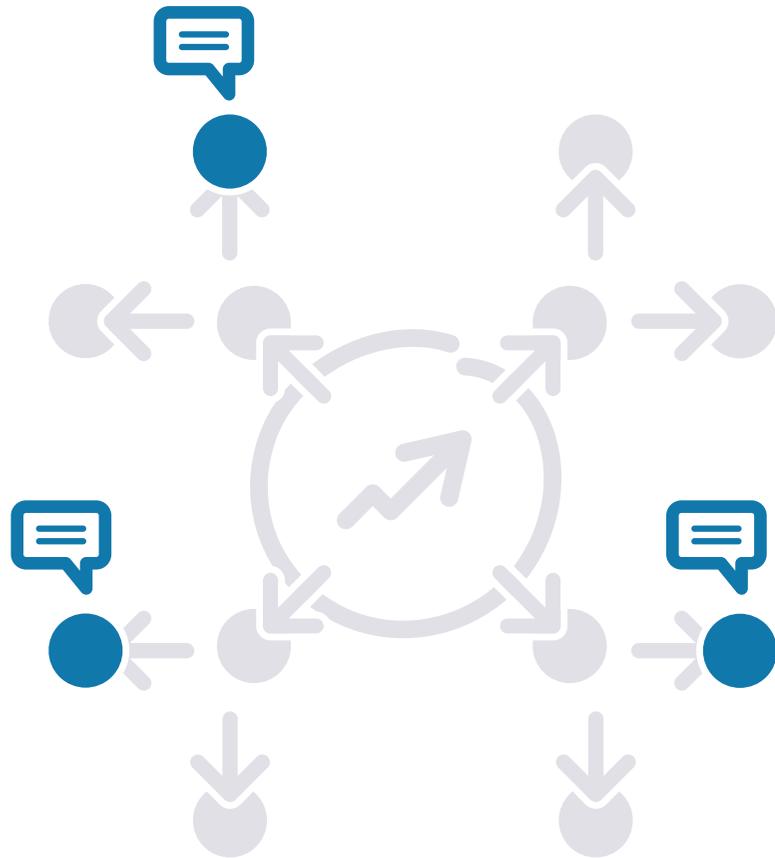
Facilitation

Groups now brainstorm all the possible "second-order", indirect effects of each of the first-order (direct) consequences written down in Step 2. Ask the same questions from Step 2 and build out from there, and add the new implications to the map diagram in the same way. Then, repeat this by identifying the third-order consequences, fourth-order consequences, and so on.

Encourage participants to explore implications of the central theme in all the "STEEP" categories – social (cultural), technological, economic, ecological, political. And to remember implications are not always negative. Our minds tend to always go to the negative first, if you find that happening, try flipping the insight 180 degrees to consider potential positive opportunities and the perspectives of other relevant stakeholders.

Step 4

Analyze possible futures



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Facilitation

Once you've completed all of the levels of the Disruption Map, you will have dozens of implication branches and subbranches. The final map diagram provides a clear picture of the possible direct and indirect consequences resulting from the core change.

Now ask participants to rate the probability and desirability (negative or positive) of each implication happening. Scoring can be numeric and added directly on the Disruption Map diagram.

Have a person from each group share a surprising, particularly disruptive implication they identified in their Disruption Map.

Step 5

Identify actions, and next steps

● _____

● _____

● _____

● _____

● _____

● _____

● _____

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Facilitation

Where there are potential negative implications, consider how they may affect your business, and what plans may need to be put in place to mitigate them. In terms of positive consequences, consider what are the next steps to take full advantage of these opportunities.

If time permits, allow additional shareouts. Groups may also consider taking a single implication from their Disruption Map to further explore and deep dive in creating a new map.