

TRENDS OUTLINE

“We used to do SWOT analyses every few years, but they rarely helped. The simple breakdown of the Trends Outline got us focused fast. It made us realize we had to do more than just list the issues: we had to make big bet on the few things that could radically transform us.” – CEO, Construction company

In What 3 Ways Will Your World Change?

The Trends Outline deals with opportunities and threats in a structured, sensible way (see the Competitor Grid for strengths and weaknesses). It takes courage to look squarely at the big forces that might make everyone uncomfortable. But it’s better to get ahead of trends than have them bury you. See the next page for a more detailed breakdown.

**MARKET
LABOR
TECHNOLOGY
REGULATIONS
INDUSTRY
MACROECONOMICS**

Benefits

The Center’s tools minimize omissions, improve communications, and foster collaboration. The **Trends Outline**:

- Helps the everyone, including the Board focus on the biggest issues
- Ensures your overall plan isn’t just reacting to today’s problems and markets
- Shows everyone how they connect—and matter to—the world at large

Difficulty Easy
Estimated time 2 to 4 hours

Instructions

Share one or two provocative articles about the future of your industry (industry associations are often a good source).

1. Brainstorm all the trends that might substantially affect you.
2. Choose those with reasonable probabilities and ignore those with remote possibility.
3. Research the ones that seem most substantial.
4. Then highlight those you feel you must respond to—and then respond to them!
5. Consider assigning someone to be your futurist.

Subscribers can contact the Center for assistance.

Make It Better

Users should share ideas for improving any of the Center’s tools and how they’re taught and formatted. It’s also great to suggest new applications or brand-new tools.

TRENDS IDEAS (partial)

This is just a seed list. See The Index for other ideas.

MARKET

- Demographics of prospects and customers
- Psychographics (behaviors by cohort)

LABOR

- Demographics of employees and recruits
- Psychographics (behaviors by cohort)

TECHNOLOGY

- Production technology
- Communications technology
- Information systems

REGULATIONS

- Local, state, federal
- International trade
- Regulations affecting customers

INDUSTRY

- Competitor concentration (mergers and acquisitions)
- Vertical integration or disintermediation
- Operations techniques

MACROECONOMICS

- Inflation
- Recession risks
- Political risks
- Cost of and access to capital