



Why Scenario Thinking and Implausibility are Essential for Organisational Transformation

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Posted by [Dr Tony Peloso](#) on 25 February, 2020



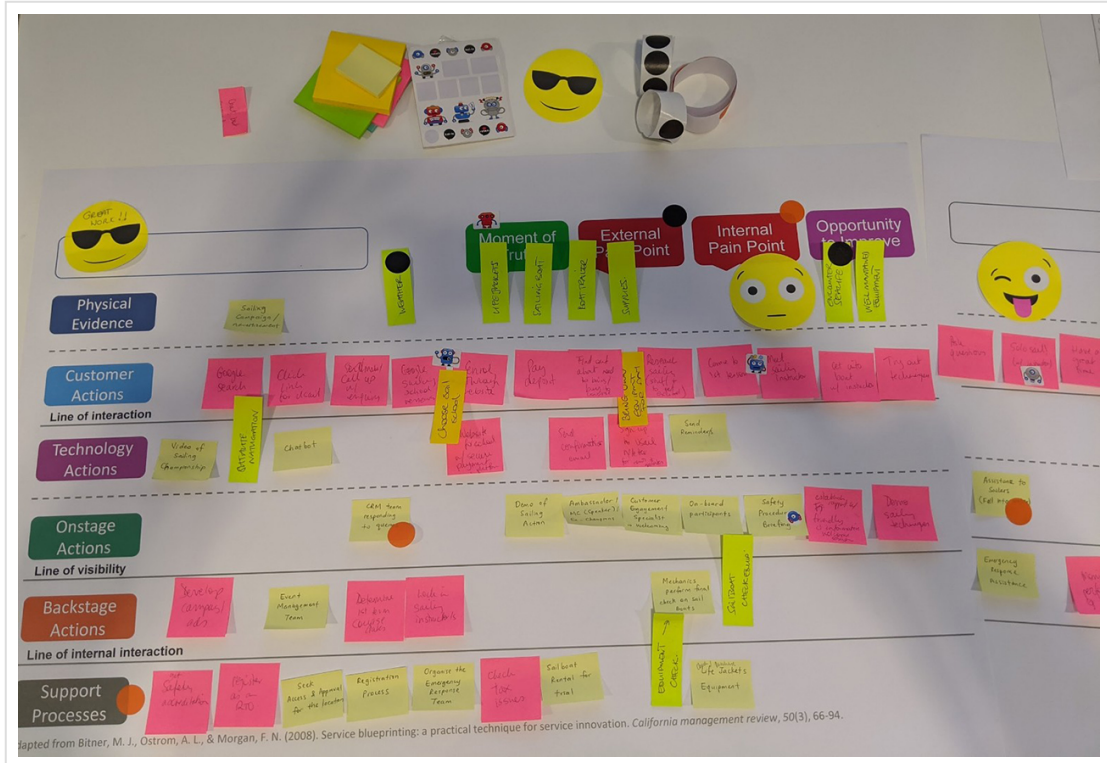
The more we drive input into our thinking and decision models, the more possibilities and opportunities we can explore. David Snowden's Cynefin Framework suggests that by addressing issues from the place of complexity thinking, we not only have a way to work but it also gives us a divergent way of thinking.

This leads to the concept of *requisite variety*. Recent work at QUT suggests that government policymakers and strategists must look more broadly and widely as they explore external trends. The idea that external factors need to be context-specific is a dangerous and outdated idea. Rather than scenario planning that leads to plausibility and highly likely outcomes and certainty, agencies that are truly looking for transformative future models, must be focused on *scenario thinking* and *implausibility*.

This ambidexterity and bimodality is essential in the rapidly evolving space of digital transformation in state and national agencies and departments. The more powerful and varied the inputs, the greater the likelihood of true transformation in the public sector and beyond.

In the public sector, the trend is to proclaim that a culture that supports a 'fail-fast' philosophy is encouraged. However, culture and circumstances rarely allow for such experimentation. One tool often used is the scenario planning model.

However, many who use scenario planning models carefully focus on the element of 'planning' when conducting their analyses and use the process and like-minded people to create 'plausible' outcomes and possibilities.



In our view, that leads to 'same', and at times either less than optimal possible solutions or even worse, catastrophe.

We are proponents of **scenario thinking** and the idea of **implausibility**. The implausible can powerfully suggest new models and ways of thinking, and it will also allow for contemplation of those potentially unwelcome events and outcomes that may create disaster. Traditional scenario planning has a bias towards the known and safe, simply because the process ultimately creates a false sense of security and a 'green lighting' effect.

Scenario thinking allows for strategy teams to experiment with the complex, chaos and disorder elements of the Cynefin decision framework.

Ambidexterity is essential as a strategy mindset!

To create and enact better and more successful strategies, those driving transformation must use expansive models and techniques to leverage current and future capabilities. QUT's Strategy Mapping tools, delivered through a number of courses including the Public Sector Management Program (PSMP) can help you more effectively design the future!

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