Futuring Executive Education Reflections
Reflections: what we learned at the Hong Kong UST Unicon Conference

- 3 Tools
- 10 Focal Questions of the Unicon Conference participants
- 16 Scenarios created by the Unicon Conference participants
- 4 Winning Scenarios, voted by Unicon Conference participants
- Implications and Actions
- Take Aways
What have we learned?

3 Tools:
- Steps in Scenario Planning
- 7 Steps to the Focal Question
- 12 Power Nodes and 3-D Competition
Steps in Scenario Planning

- Identify Focal Questions
- Bring outside in, expand mental maps
- Identify Driving Forces, Uncertainties
- Identify Power Node Dynamics in 3-D Competition
- Develop Scenarios
- Present the Scenarios, Tell the Story
- Sense the environment
- Use Scenarios: Implications, Actions
Identify the focal questions

The official future

The 7 questions
Bring the Outside in, Expand Mental Maps
Identifying Driving Forces

The rabbit that is already in the hat

- A driving force is an issue/force/trend that is already at work and that will shape the future inevitably—we just do not know yet how
The 12 Power Nodes

1. Brand
2. Secret Ingredient
3. Regulatory Protection
4. Focused Financial Resources
5. Customer Base with Switching Cost
6. Proprietary Process
7. Distribution Gateways
8. Dominant Position in a Layer
9. Increasing Mutual Utility
10. Aikido Assets
11. Filters and Brokers
12. Hubs

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Industry boundaries are fading:

- Increasing number of competitive dimensions
- 3–D competitive battles
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Focal Questions of the participants at the Unicon conference

Top–10 Focal Questions:
1. Faculty – Client balance
2. Competition, new entrants
3. Growth, new markets
4. Technology as enabler or threat
5. Anticipating the future; avoid the piano, valley or cliff?
6. Economic swings
7. Exec Ed business model/Value Proposition: sources of differentiation, innovation
8. New Generation learning needs
9. Shortage of resources
10. Client skills, partnerships
FUTURING Executive Education Questionnaire Results Q2a: which trends, drivers give you cause for concern or excitement?

- Entrants, MOOCs: 15
- Blended, Technology: 10
- Faculty Mismatch: 10
- Price, cost: 5
- Globalization: 5
- Demand growth: 5
- Open vs Custom: 0

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Questionnaire Results Q2b: Which Uncertainties could deliver upside or downside surprises?

# of Mentions

- Economy: 15
- B-model, consolidation: 12
- Technology: 10
- Entrants: 6
- Funding: 5

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8 Teams, 16 Scenarios

1. Parthenon
2. Black Death
3. Happy Days
4. Match.edu
5. Viral Academics
6. Personal Trainer
7. iWorld
8. Wiki-Learn
The Drivers of the 16 Scenarios

- Faculty vs Clients needs
- Delivery, learning styles
- Technology
- Resource availability
- Client relationships
- Partnerships
- Competition
- Economic cycles
8 Teams, 16 Scenarios, 4 "Winners"

1. Parthenon
   C-Sweet
2. Black Death
   Nirvana
3. Happy Days
   #Plugged In
4. Match.edu
   COOCs
5. Viral Academics
   Ka-Ching
6. Personal Trainer
   McDonald’s
7. iWorld
   Middle Earth
8. Wiki-Learn
   3 Tenors
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4 Scenarios: Implications and Actions

**Match.edu**
- Competition will be harsher, from outside the industry
- **Is consolidation a solution / possibility?**
- More assessment, demonstrate value-added
- Technology is coming
- Be cutting edge

**Black Death**
- Faculty is a necessity and a problem
- **Transform problem into a solution**

**iWorld**
- Threat of obsolescence of Exec Ed, buildings, faculty
- **Aikido skills: listen to voice of the clients /market, act quickly**

**C-Sweet**
- Narrow market, risky business
- Cooperation, allignment with competitors
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Take-aways:
Denial is not a Strategy; UNICON’s forum

We need to take positive steps and make plans for
- **Faculty**: problem or solution/cooperation
- **Competition**: problem or partnership
- **Technology**
- **Clients**: relationships, needs, response
- **Economic Cycles**

UNICON provides us with a unique forum to develop positive action and to share experience
Futuring Executive Education

2014 UNICON Directors’ Conference @HKUST
Identify the focal question

The 7 Steps

1. What keeps you awake?
2. How would you describe the current state of affairs? What were the turning points? What were the largest mistakes, smart moves? What are the lessons?
3. What would be a good outcome/scenario? What would be the positive drivers? What stands in the way?
4. What would be a bad outcome/scenario? What drivers could lead to that outcome?
5. If money, resources, were limitless, what would you change?
6. **Oracle Question:** What is your **one** question to the Oracle? How far into the future would you like her to see?
7. **Legacy Question:** How would you like to be remembered?

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