

## **How an Executive Think Tank Can Help Your Company**

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In a successful think tank, leaders learn to think together about the future. The path that develops the capability to participate at a think tank level brings out the natural creativity of leaders. They learn to take a holistic view of the organization in a collaborative process while exploring the future through scenarios.

All the strategic planning and employee development money can buy will not make a significant difference in a company without collaborative, future focused leadership

The future will be very different than we think. How do we see into an unknown future? We see into the future by letting go of current thinking and exploring many possibilities for the future beyond the constraints of current thinking. Of the many possibilities we can imagine for the future, can't forecast it with any certainty at all. However the process of exploring those scenarios prepares us to see the change coming and anticipate the unexpected. Those mental exercises can accelerate our capacity to plan and respond to surprises in an unknown future. Innovative ideas for the future depend on ones ability to develop new paradigms and think beyond today.

The first skill for participating at a think tank level is dialogue that is developing the habit of seeing deeply into others' thinking to find shared meaning through deep listening while seeking understand the thinking of others. It is also the ability to reflect on your own thinking and voice your thoughts clearly and succinctly so that others can understand your thoughts. Few people in our culture have the ability to think deeply together, listen and talk openly and reflect deeply to find shared meaning. With professional guidance we can learn these skills and begin to ingrain them into our habits as a way of life.

Any organization consists of many complex interconnected parts. By learning together to see a holistic view of the organization you will understand the interconnections of the systems within the organization. These connections are complex and interdependent. It

is difficult to map the complexity of systems and their dynamics within an organization. Collaborative exploration and deep insight are necessary. This can only be possible if the organization has the capability and desire to work at a very sophisticated level of thinking and exploring.

The challenge of emerging a think tank in an organization is daunting. Our culture is one of competition among ourselves. Deep authentic communication is uncommon. Yet can we afford not to move beyond competition and learn to think together about our uncertain future.