



Seeing Beyond the Data: *Tools to futureproof your decision- making in volatile times*

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Adapted for



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My premise for today's discussion:

A modern leader is more a navigator than a general

More data means better decisions, right? ... Unless we're asking the wrong questions

*Having all the answers is less useful than **knowing how to move forward when the usual rules stop working***

Navigating amidst volatility: Charting a path when your "organizational GPS" is stuck in a bad connection zone

*Technology can help us to think better, but **it's a learned skill to think differently***

Industry forum is a perfect space for thinking differently



"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence - it is to act with yesterday's logic." Peter Drucker

To move with the times, let's ask AI to help our reflection What stories do we tell ourselves and others about Lubricants?



From pyramids to future space exploration, our industry lubricates every moving part ...

*If lubricants are omnipresent and futureproof –
Do we, as leaders, really need to worry about disruption?*

The investors may see a different view ... Some quotes from past conversations

Risk of Negative Terminal Value in Acquisitions

*Acquiring lubricant businesses in a declining market raises terminal value concerns, as the **assets may be worth significantly less in the future***

”

Declining Demand Due to EV Adoption & Efficiency gains

*The long-term structural decline in lubricant demand **is a clear risk**, driven by the rise of electric vehicles and consumption rationalization due to efficiency*

”

“Sunset Industry”

*While lubricants offer a welcome source of stability as a part of the investment portfolio, **the industry does not excite** when compared to other investment options*

”

Leaders need to seek out challenging perspectives to respond proportionately

Proportionality: The reality is nuanced, as should be leaders' response

Unfocused Doomscroll:

Leads to loss of motivation

Insights into what you can't control are unproductive

Healthy Worry:

Proactively seek out "what we may not see"

Triage the signals - leads to effective responses

Comforting Denial:

Filtering out unsettling views leads to vulnerability

Managing only what is familiar is riskier than in the past

HOW: Structured foresight tools and process

**Let's look at outside examples:
Can "Stable" industries really be disrupted?**



A tale of two industries



Case Study 1: UK Energy Utility – from entrant to market leader in 10 years



Founded as a challenger
 (“Big Six” = 87% of domestic energy market)

First Partnerships:

- Inroads via partnerships
- Supply deal with Shell and Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) status

Unicorn Status, Expansion:

- Investment from Origin Energy – value over £1B
- Entered US via startup Evolve Energy

Becomes UK’s largest provider by customer numbers

2015

2018

2020

2024

2017

2019

2021

Technology-Driven Tariffs & Service:

- “Agile Octopus” – a first-of-its-kind time-of-use tariff that updates prices daily based on half-hourly wholesale costs

Surpassed 1 Million Customers & Deepened its tech-driven model:

- Amazon’s Alexa partnership

- Unique local tariff backed by own wind turbines
- Acquisitions in the US and Japan driven by its Kraken digital platform

Lessons learned

1 *Never assume your dominance is unassailable, watch out for weak signals*

2 *Customer-centric Innovation is a winning strategy not just a marketing spiel*

3 *Technology can be leveraged to reinvent the business model*

Case Study 2: Fitness Business Model challenged by Weight Loss Drugs GPL-1s



vs



and

...



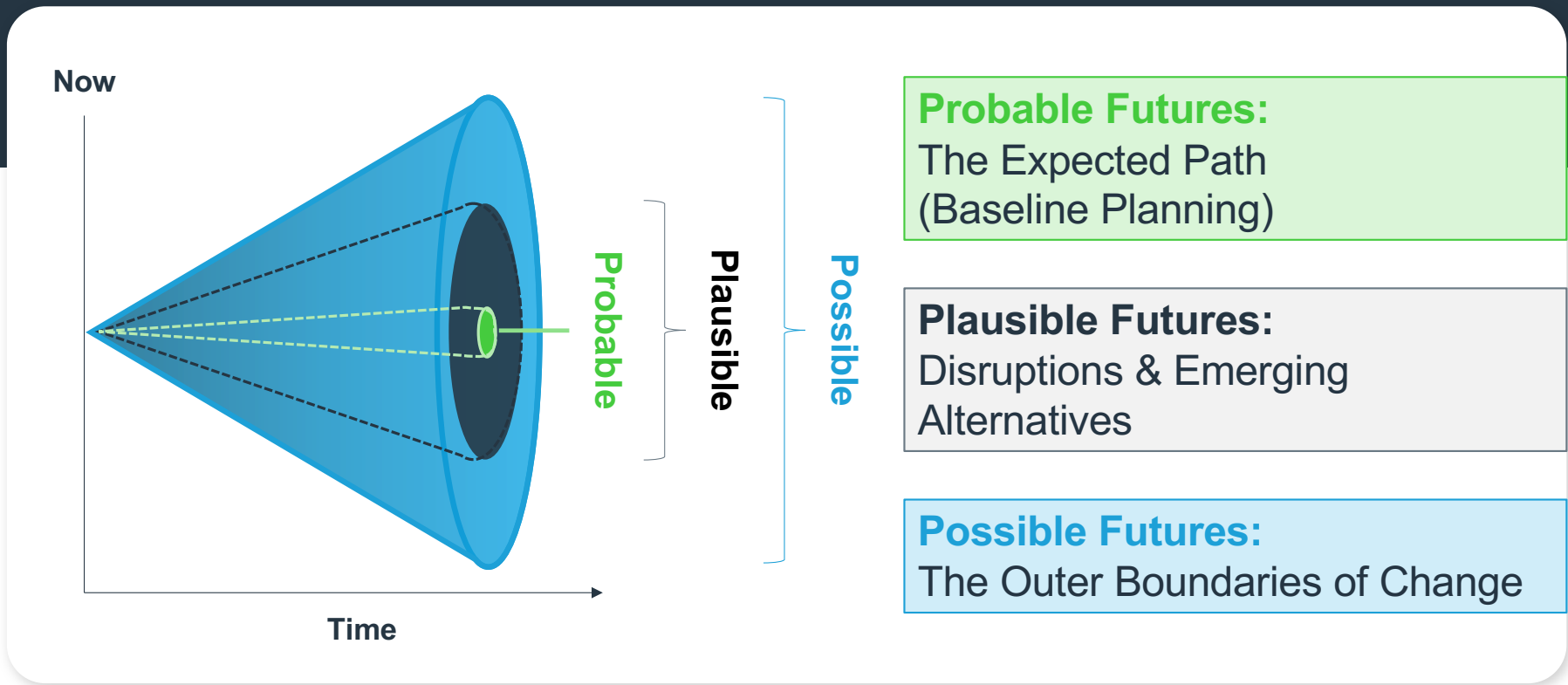
Lessons learned

1 *Watch for disruption to the customer's Job-to-be-done*

2 *Not all will be disrupted in the same manner => dig deep what it means for your business*

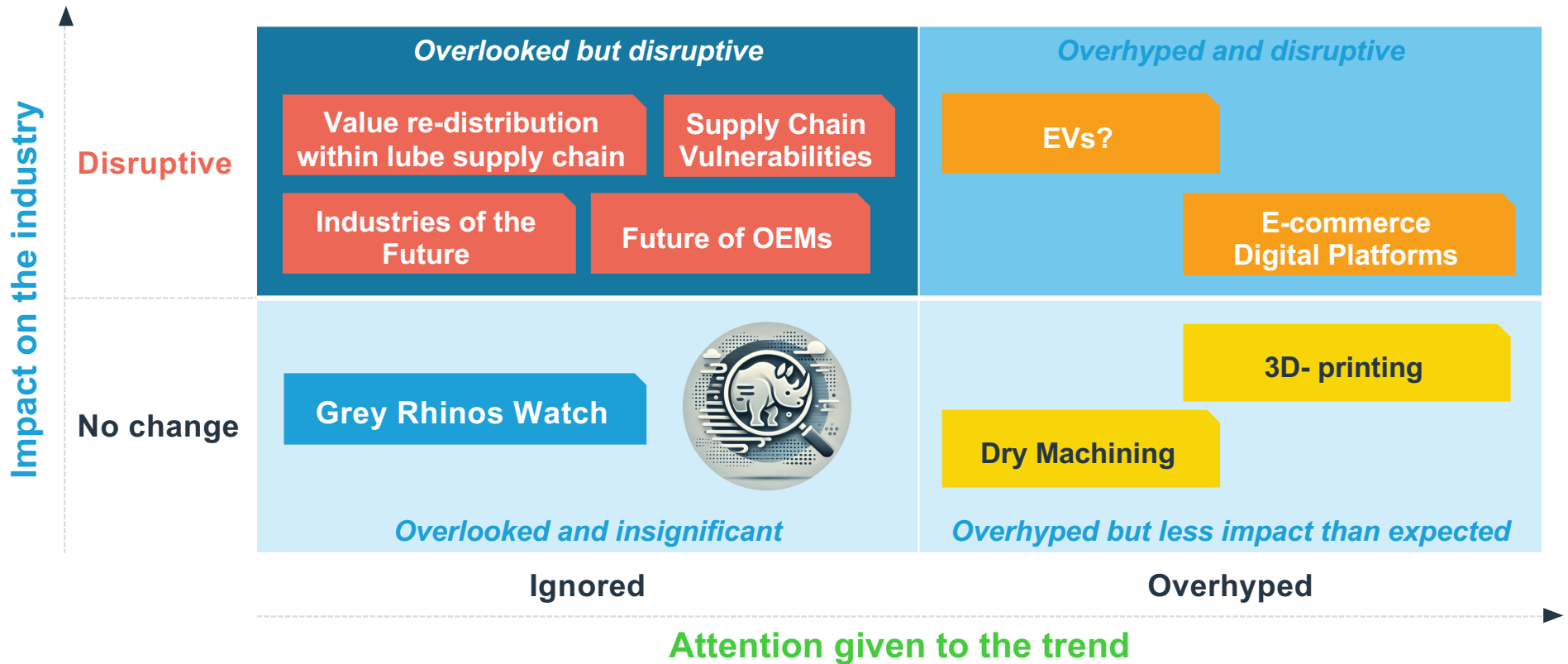
3 *Watch for weak signals and dependencies – but calibrate through signposts*

Future-proofing is not about predicting the exact outcomes, It's about reducing blind spots vs possible future scenarios



"Futures Cone" Illustration adapted from Voros 2003; idea, terms and name from Hancock & Bezold 1994

Let's bring this closer to home: What is on your radar?

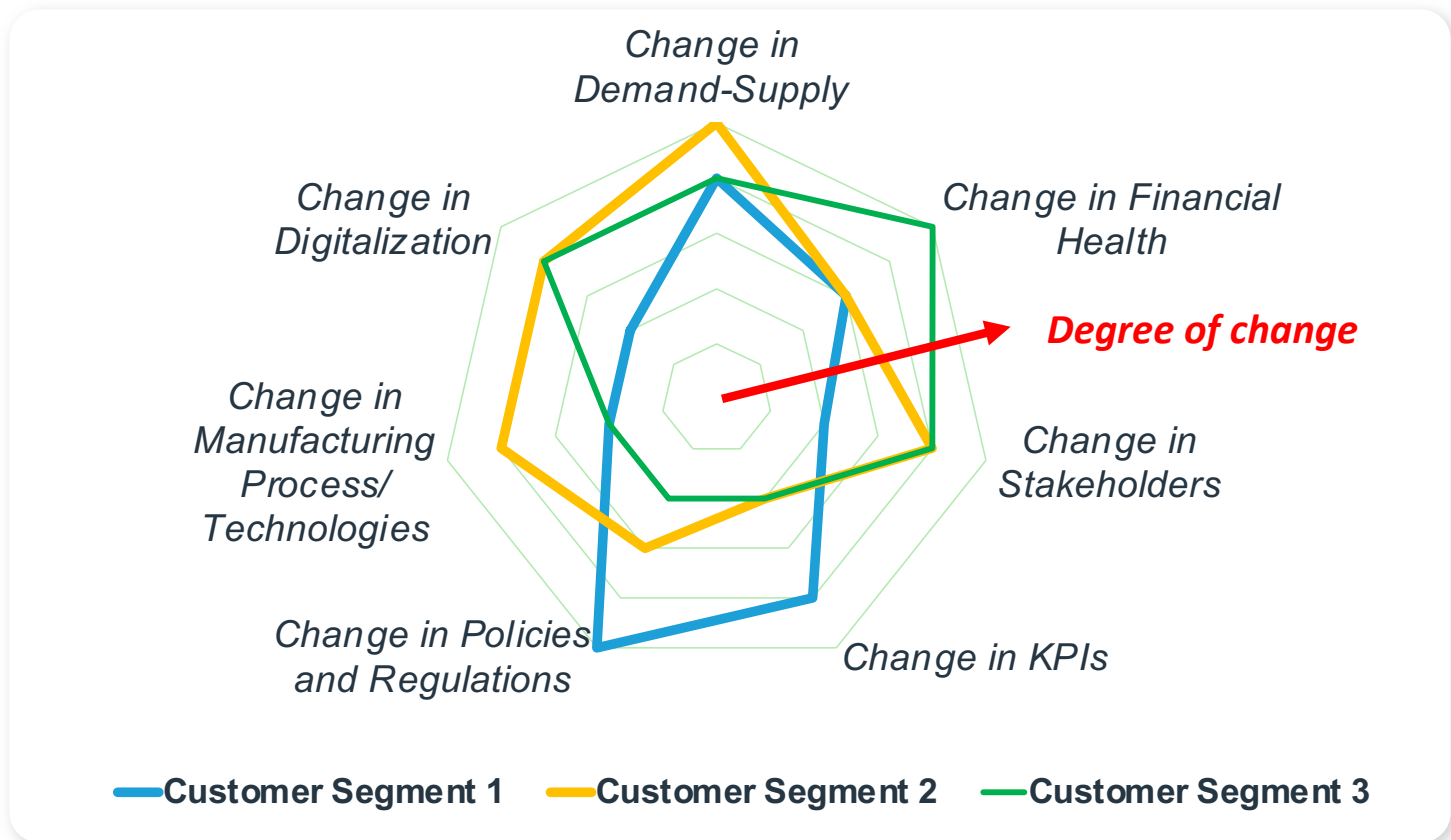


This analysis needs to be done for different time horizons + Add DEGREE OF CONTROL lens

The question to ask: How are your customers changing - Surviving or Thriving? You need to have a plan for any major shift

LOOK FOR THE SOURCE:

What is changing behind and ahead of you in the value chain?



In conclusion - In the end, it is all about the PEOPLE

Diversity + Org design

- › Exposure to unfamiliar environments and contexts
- › There are no answers in the building: The value of stepping out
- › Continuous reconfiguration as a norm

Strategy done differently: More fluid, more customer-centric, less industry-bound, wider lens to define the value creation and sharing

- › Timeframe: how many organizations are capable and willing to look beyond 10 years? Remember “3 horizons”
- › How much application expertise is explicit/codified vs imbedded (=at risk)



Adam Grant ✓
@AdamMGrant

The hallmark of expertise is no longer how much you know. It's how well you synthesize.

Information scarcity rewarded knowledge acquisition. Information abundance requires pattern recognition.

It's not enough to collect facts. The future belongs to those who connect dots.

We need the right people, doing lateral thinking with best available tools

Most of our careers will be spent in transition

Are we training & hiring for this?

Evolution = Adaptation

Strategy = Resilience
vs many scenarios, not
maximization of one

Let's continue
this conversation...

"The future is already here; it's just not evenly distributed."

William Gibson, Writer

”

"All failure is a failure to adapt."

Max McKeown, Innovation Researcher

”

"Companies need different skills, metrics, and people to manage the tasks inherent in each stage of their development."


Rita McGrath, Professor of Management

”

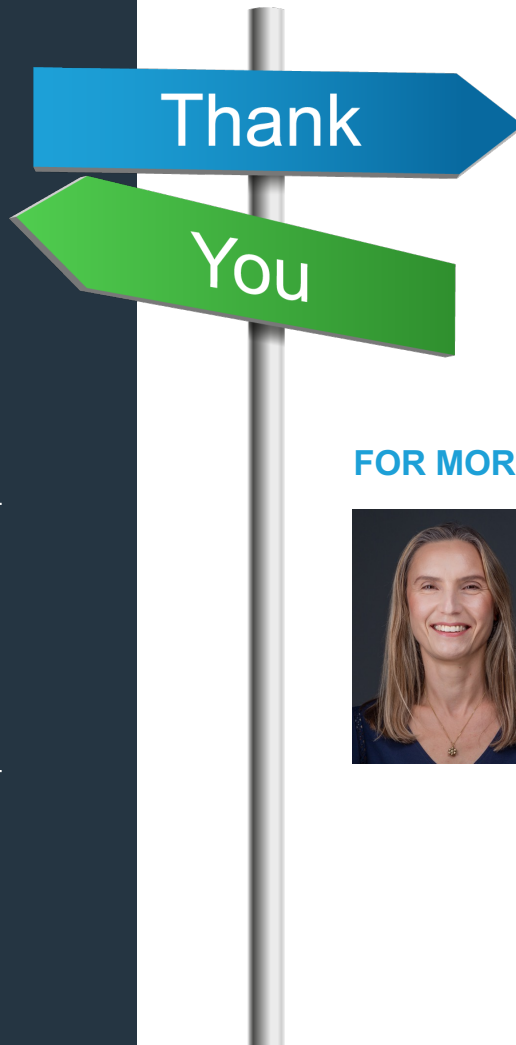
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