



Future Search

Purposes and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint formulation of future vision and strategy• Plan for implementation of an existing vision or strategy• Fast action on complex issues that lack a coordination structure
When to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems that cross the borders of the organisation or community• Developing coalition• Shared vision is desired, action plan is a necessity• High time pressure, urgent questions• An important change is at hand (merger, change of power)
Group size	60 – 80 (>80 in serial conferences)
Participants	Cross-section of stakeholders
Length	16 hours over three days (sleep twice)
Preparation time	3 – 6 month, monitoring results of actions during the following 12 month
Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the past from perspectives of self, organisation or community and society; identify the events, trends and developments shaping the future• Map the present in all its complexity; identify the prouds and sorries resulting from relations with the institution(s) or issue(s) at hand• Create ideal future scenarios of the most desirable attainable future, 5 – 20 years ahead• Find common ground and develop a shared vision• Develop action plans
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation group of participants• Set format• Work with mixed table groups and with stakeholder groups
Conditions for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the “whole system” in the room, invite a significant cross-section of all parties with a stake in the outcome• Explore “the whole elephant” before seeking to fix any part, get everybody talking about the same world; think globally, act locally• Put common ground and future focus front and centre while treating problems and conflicts as information, not action items• Encourage self-management and responsibility for action by participants before, during, and after the future search
Developers	Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff