

NEW FUTURES?

Building a world after Covid-19

Ipsos' approaches
to planning for
the future

*Ipsos Futures Advisory
Board, 2020*







The challenge: preparing for a future after Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrust governments, businesses and citizens into an uncertain new world.

We can see the immediate challenges Covid-19 is posing for citizens, consumers, employees and the bottom line, across the world.

But the longer-term challenge for business and government is: how to plan for the future, when today and tomorrow are uncertain?

Most predictions are wrong

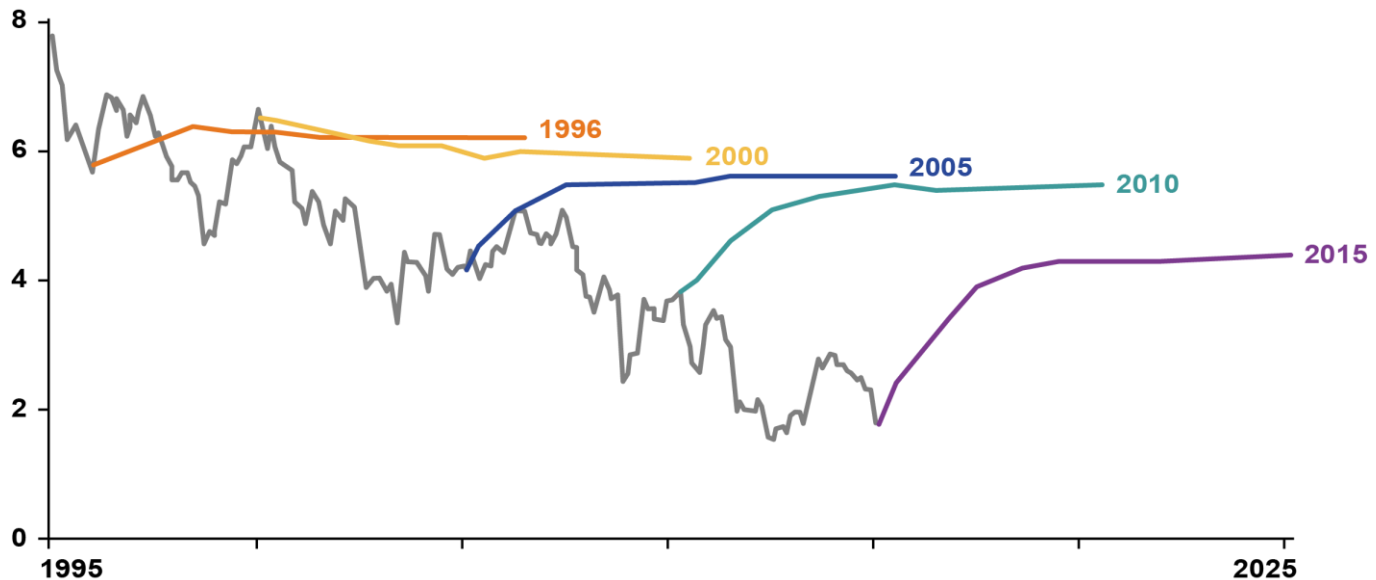
Change is not simple. Macro forces act “top down” to affect trends in daily life, while small shifts and new innovations can, over time, act “bottom up” to change norms and values.

Forecasting is usually bad at describing the complex, interrelated and emergent outcomes of disruption.

Predictions about the future price of oil, or the growth in a nation’s economy can be thrown off course. As the chart below shows; all forecasts of ten-year treasury rates predicted better outcomes than reality.

Trends from the past only take us so far. In a period of systemic change, the ultimate shape of the future will take time to emerge.

10-year Treasury Rates — and Historical Economist Forecasts (%) (coloured lines)



Note: Forecasts are those reported by Blue Chip Economic Indicators released in March of the given calendar year, the median of over 50 private-sector economists. **Source:** Blue Chip Economic Indicators, Aspen Publishers.

Foresight goes beyond forecasting

Forecasts relating to the world after Covid-19 focus on the broad shape of the global economic recovery.

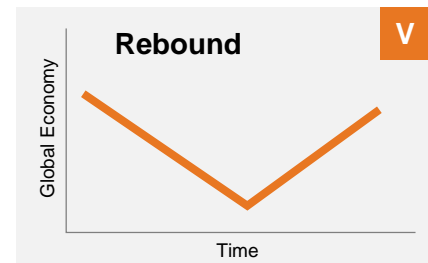
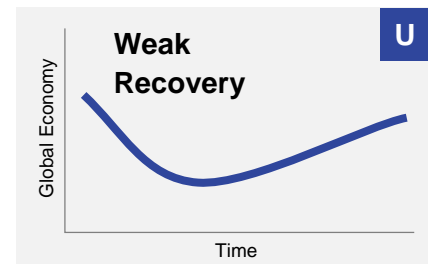
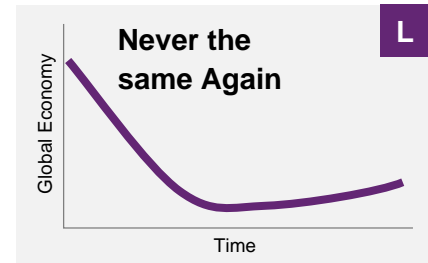
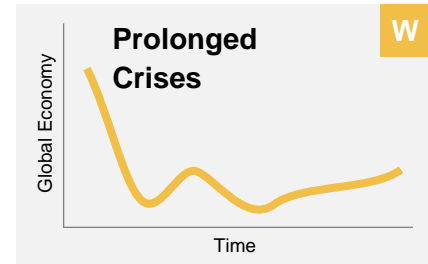
To understand the implications of these, and how industries, businesses and governments should plan and respond to them, **we turn to foresight**.

At Ipsos, we adopt both a top-down and a bottom-up approach to foresight, blending trend analysis with futures thinking. We combine longer-term macro force analysis with observation of granular, small-scale societal shifts and innovations. This nuanced approach captures the interrelationships within the change ecosystem, and allows us to build scenarios.

Our work capitalises on Ipsos' unparalleled knowledge about societal and macro trends. This allows us to contextualise insight and trends in a broader, coherent understanding of the changes which are impacting citizens, consumers and the wider world.

Our foresight work explores the drivers of change impacting governments, brands, consumers and societies as the pandemic progresses. We learn from the world's response to past crises; from the new innovations we see in response to the pandemic; and from the societies furthest forward in the progress of the pandemic.

We apply this learning to help decision-makers plan strategically for their future, align on the things that need to be monitored, and help make decisions now.





The “new normal” – The dawn of the era of turbulence

We need to get comfortable with uncertainty

Climate change, population shifts, inequality and geopolitical tensions are all growing. In our data-dependent, interconnected global economy, disruptive global events are becoming more likely, and will have bigger impacts when they happen.

Covid-19 is today’s challenge. But it is likely the first of many such events, rather than a single outlier. Investing now in planning for future uncertainty will help business, government and society become more resilient.

You are the future

As an individual, and as a decision-maker, in the face of a global pandemic, it is easy to feel powerless. But we do not need to watch as if we were passive bystanders to the change happening around us.

Futures work, done right, is empowering. It helps focus attention on what can be changed now for a better tomorrow. Your business or policy will help to create the future, by capitalising on the opportunity to influence changing behaviours and values for the better.

A Newton's cradle with five silver spheres hanging from thin wires against a black background. The spheres are arranged in a horizontal line, with two on the left and three on the right. The rightmost sphere is slightly higher than the others, suggesting it has just struck or is about to strike them.

“

The future is uncertain because cause and effect are rarely simple. A single cause can have any number of effects, some predictable but many unforeseen”.

Margaret Heffernan



Four questions to navigate the future

1

How will our values change over time?

2

How different will the future be from what went before?

3

How can I plan for multiple scenarios?

4

What should I be monitoring and why?

Summary: your questions and how we can help

The question	Ipsos service	Key deliverables
1 How will our values change over time?	TrendTRAC linking Ipsos Global Trends with Covid-19 signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends Presentation: Covid-19 and Change • Signals activation workshop • Playbook and outline monitoring framework • Access to Global Trends Survey data portal
2 How different will the future be from what went before?	Instant Future: Worlds Afterwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three syndicated scenarios for short term assessment of societal change • Workshop activation for your business or policy context
3 How can I plan for multiple scenarios?	Bespoke Horizon Scans and Scenario Building – grounded in Ipsos’ proprietary frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenarios for the future of your business or policy area, delivered in a strategic playbook • Workshops for strategic activation
4 What should I be monitoring and why?	Monitoring frameworks and tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report or live digital monitoring framework to understand which scenarios emerge • Workshops for strategic activation – at a cadence relevant to your cycles



01

**How will our
values change
over time?**

Analysing the impact of significant disruption on society and values

TrendTRAC

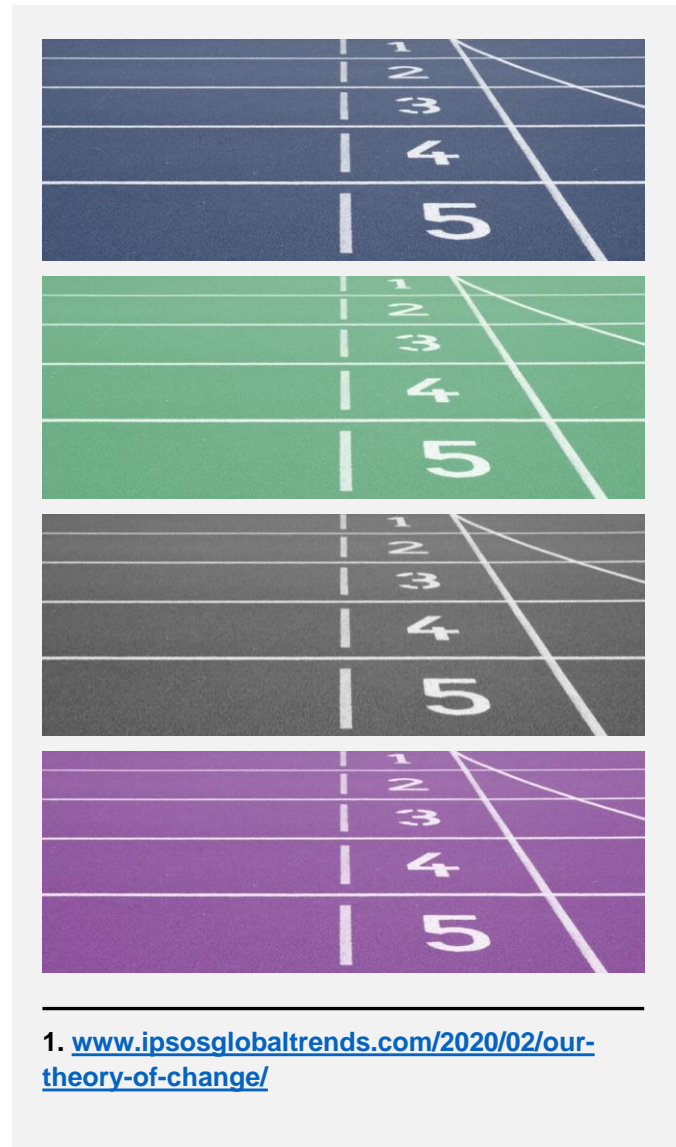
Our TrendTRAC framework is a systematic way to assess the disruptions of Covid-19 and understand how the signals we see now might impact a sector; both now, and as the pandemic situation evolves and ultimately transitions to the new normal.

The Ipsos theory of change [1] is based on the empirical evidence that macro forces (long-term, global certainties such as demographic change or climate change) usually impact slowly on human beliefs and behaviours.

At the other end of the scale, sudden shocks to the system – like Covid-19 – cause immediate seismic shifts in everyday life. This creates a tsunami of new signals of change. The signals can show us how life is changing and the direction of change.

However, not all dramatic changes in behaviour or attitudes lead to long lasting and significant change over time.

The challenge, then, is to decide which signals are important. Which aspects of the Covid-19 crisis will lead to change in a sector, and which will cause temporary changes, after which we will revert back to previous behaviour?



Isn't everything changing?

Some values hold true, even when the world changes.

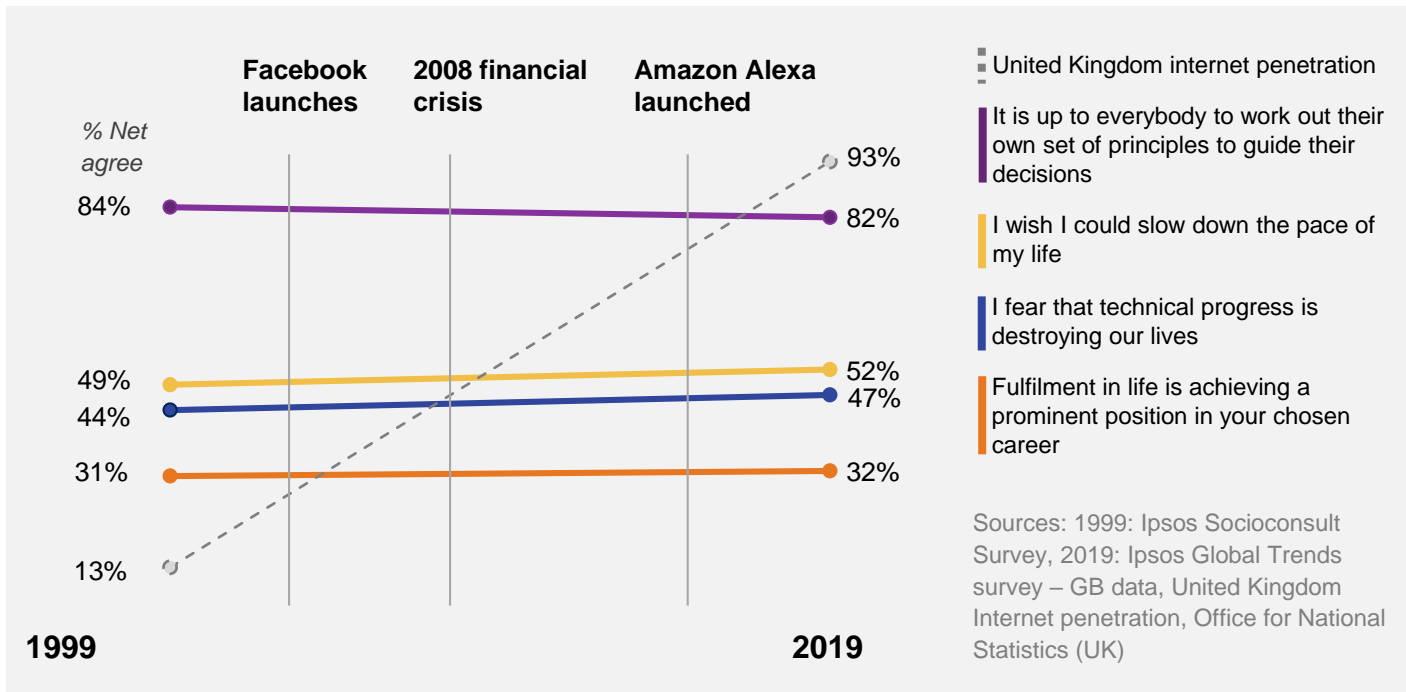
Historic data shows how some values still hold true over the medium-term. The chart below shows that Britons over the last 20 years have not changed their views on fear of technology, life fulfilment and attitudes to the pace of life – even as internet penetration rose dramatically.

It can be tempting to read the dramatic changes

we are living through as a sign that society and business will be changed permanently.

But when we look at the signals of change in response to Covid-19, we see many examples of people interpreting its impact through the lens of the values they already hold.

Grounding new changes in a framework of pre-existing values creates insight into what will change and what will stay the same; and identifies opportunities for innovation.

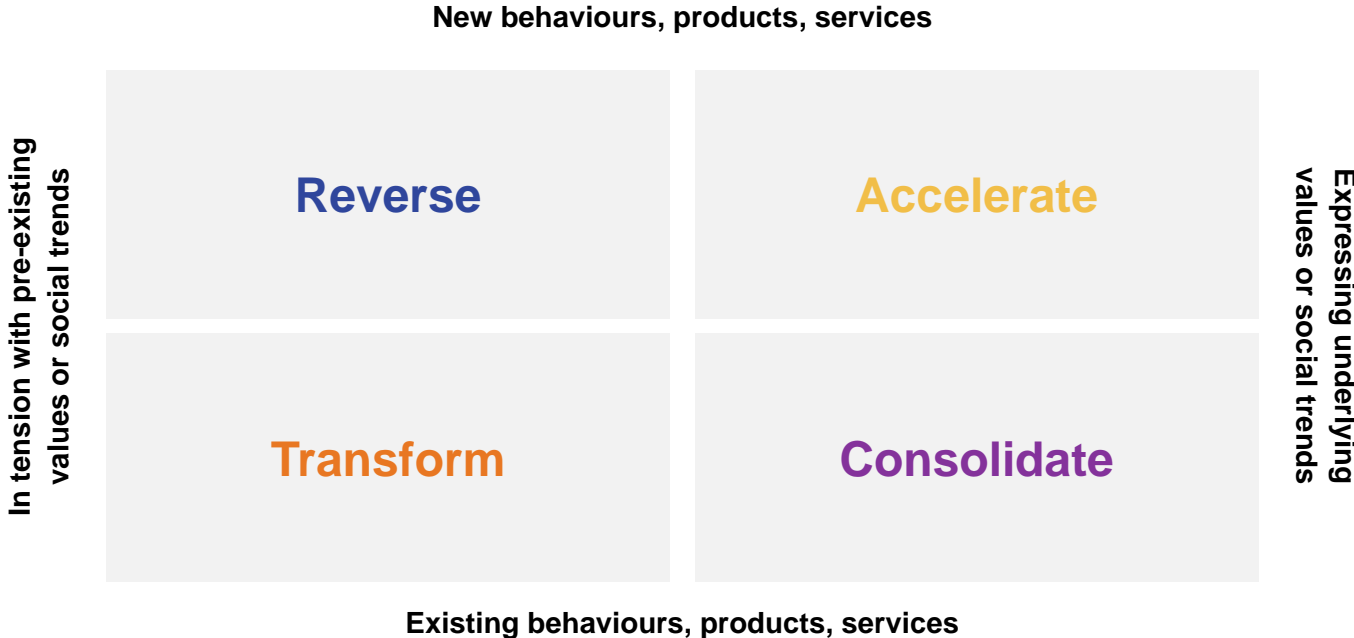


Ipsos TrendTRAC – our method

We scan for signals in the industry sector or social dimensions which are important for our clients. We identify how all the signals relate to our 36 Global Trends value set (for example, around climate emergency, or fear of the future). We then question the signals. Are these manifestations of the global values we have seen already? Do these represent new behaviours, new innovations, or new uses of existing resources? Asking these questions lets us map the signals onto our TRAC framework.

This lets us sift through many signals, spot patterns and identify the ones which are most important – those which are set to establish new changes, new consumer habits, new social norms, and gradually to influence values.

We develop a structure of priorities for monitoring the signals as they continue to evolve.



Reverse

Some changes will seem to go against the grain of existing values we find in GTS or trends previously in progress in the sector. These need to be questioned. Do they meet new needs which have emerged from the crisis, or are they filling temporary needs which will melt away? Will they be replaced by different behaviours (e.g. after lockdowns have ended)? We might expect these trends to **reverse (R)** once the crisis is over.

Accelerate

Some signals seem to 'double down' on global values, and represent new ways of meeting needs which were already strongly expressed and dominant. These are trends which are likely to **accelerate (A)** values or behaviours which we saw before the pandemic.

Transform

Tensions between consumer or social needs point the way to potential for **transformative (T)** new trends. These ideas will need to be monitored. They can be used as stimulus for creative strategising, or to inspire innovations which can be piloted.

Consolidate

Finally, some changes will simply allow existing trends to **continue (C)** - these should be monitored to identify where reactive change is not necessary, reassuring you of the areas where consistency is required.

Example: Conscious Eating TrendTRAC

As concern about the environment rises, the link between what is good for us and what is good for the planet has grown. Organic, natural and plant-based options are becoming a more prominent part of the supermarket vista. Eight-in-ten think eating right is central to good health.

Sixty-five per cent say they will sacrifice convenience if it means getting healthier products.

In the 2020s, environmental awareness may become something of a hygiene factor and as climate concerns become more pronounced, it may be that the balancing act between our own health and the planet's wellbeing becomes increasingly visible.

New behaviours, products, services

In tension with pre-existing values or social trends

Reverse

Long-life, but low nutrition, foods like soup or pasta sauce have seen growth in demand due to stockpiling.

Some US states have delayed their plastic bag bans due to Covid-19.

Accelerate

Many are claiming that Covid-19 reflects our widespread ecological destruction and poor farming practices (like factory farming).

Cities are reallocating road space to cyclists to keep people healthy in lockdown.

Transform

Single-use plastic is still prevalent, and much cardboard packaging is infused with plastic. However, will this change if customers begin to see plastic packaging as hygienic? Can innovations solve this problem?

Consolidate

Sales in independent butchers and grocers have risen by a third, potentially due to a desire to buy locally.

Covid-19 has led to people wanting to grow their own food.

Organic food has seen an increase in demand

Expressing underlying values or social trends

Existing behaviours, products, services

How will our values change over time?

The answer

Leveraging solid evidence of global values from our Ipsos Global Trends 2020 dataset, providing a context for the changes happening in your sector, and helping you understand which changes are likely to stick, and which may not.

How

- Collating signals from desk research, consumer research and beyond
 - Using Ipsos TrendTRAC framework to analyse new signals against ongoing important values.
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Activation

Ipsos Global Trends presentation and signals workshops to focus in on your sector and citizen/consumer behaviour, validate specific hypotheses and develop monitoring frameworks for changes to values or behaviours which are of strategic importance.



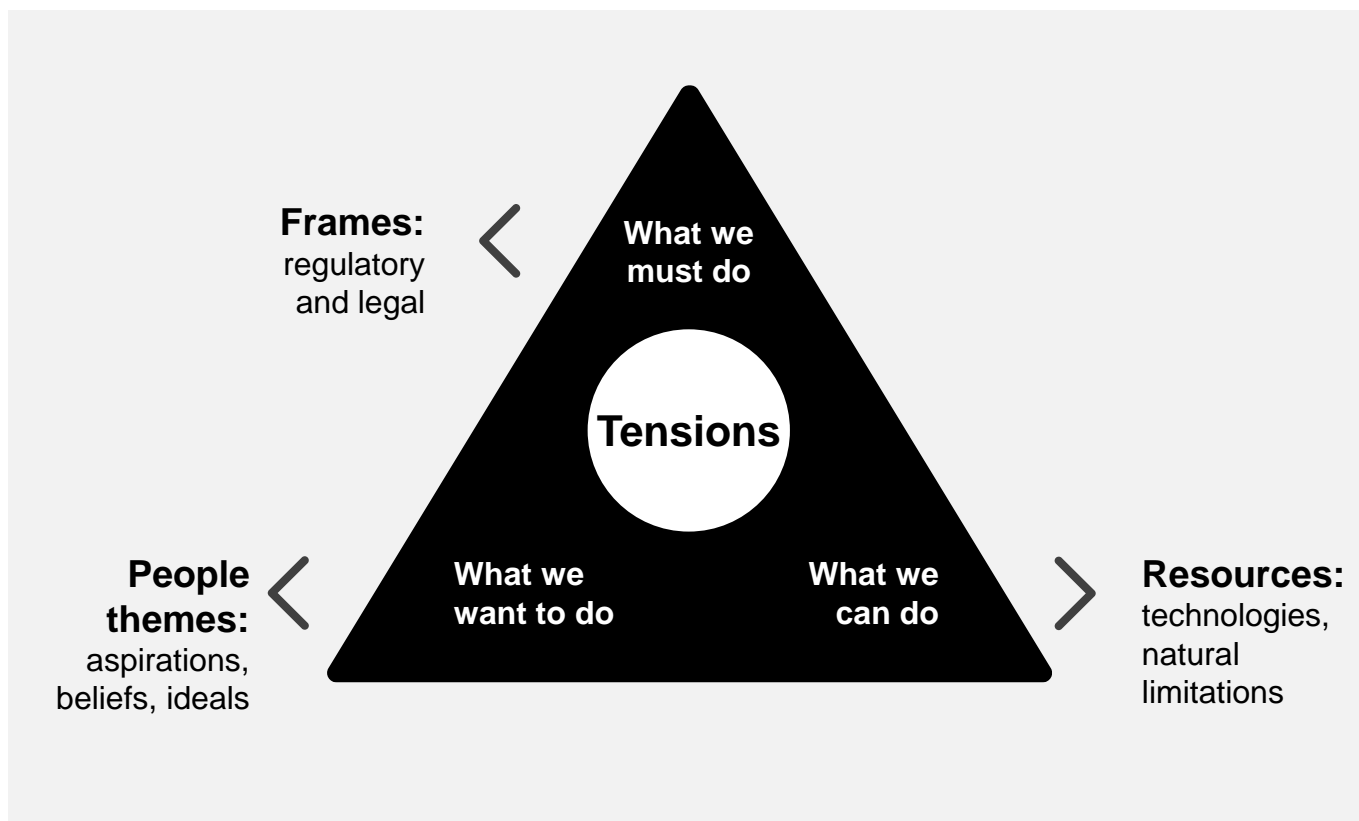
02

**How different will
the future be from
what went before?**



Our model of society identifies three elements in tension. We have used this to build scenarios which illustrate the nature of future society.

We have built three big-picture potential societies, which explore different ways these three elements will interact differently in future.



Building Instant Futures

Analysis of human values in the world we knew before

What were the diverging forces (populism, tech, naturalness...)?

What values, beliefs, emotive theories, hopes, did people take with them into lockdown, and where did they come from?

What tensions could we already see?



Impact of Covid-19

At a macro level (politics, nations, economics) and micro level (people, citizens, consumers).

Under economic pressure, what new rules and habits will regulate our lives when we emerge from lockdown? How will the emotional experiences we have had impact our resilience, and affect our needs and fears in future? What limitations and new possibilities will emerge for example in technology or through climate change?



To generate three possible directions for futures

What are the key drivers which might take us to these different worlds?

What will life look like in each world?

How will consumer and citizen needs change?

How might these three stories play out differently in different geographies or cultures?

Instant Futures – starting the conversation

A syndicated report on three potential futures for society, along with a number of drivers which can be used to build alternative futures.

These are based on expert points of view including economists, politicians, futurists and journalists, as well as opinion surveys, data on consumption in markets in lockdown and Ipsos public datasets.

We bring these futures to innovation and strategy workshops to explore the implications of each for your brand, category or policy area, and identify the decisions to take now.

Accessible, mid-term future stories to inspire short-term scenario planning today.

Direction 1: Neo-globalisation



Direction 2: National New Deal



Direction 3: Autonomous communities



How different will the future be from what went before?

The answer

- Using foresight to imagine different probable short and mid-term futures, from now until 2025. Starting from our last portrait of the “old world”, we have analysed the forces and dynamics influencing our lives during the quarantine, and come up with three scenarios of tomorrow’s society, ruled by distinct dominant values, in which life and consumption will feel very different.
-

How

- 360° research based on cross analysis of intelligence. We have analysed the potential interactions between 3 key elements: the frames (political, legal), the resources (purchase power, tech, science, nature, etc.) and the people (aspirations and fears.)
 - Three different overarching, archetypal narratives of the future.
-

Activation

- Help you project your current business into different realities and evaluate your level of readiness for each. By so doing we inspire your mission: to which scenario do you want to contribute? Which one aligns with your values?
- This is a starting point for scenario building: as a next step, our teams can further assist you in the adaptation of these scenarios to your business and identify key challenges for you in a near future.



A photograph of a person's lower leg and foot. The person is wearing light-colored, possibly khaki, trousers that are slightly bunched at the ankle. They are wearing a dark blue sneaker with white laces and a white sole. The person is standing on a grey asphalt surface with white painted lines. The background is a bright, overexposed area.

03

**How can I plan
for multiple
scenarios?**

It's not about being RIGHT, it's about being PREPARED

There are two types of futures: those that are outside of your control and those that you can create.

One approach is to minimise the headwinds and maximise the tailwinds.

The other is to adapt effectively, or to transform the future into one which positions you as the winner.

Both approaches require bespoke scenario building and activation.

What are scenarios?

Scenarios are robust stories of the future – not hypotheses or vague ideas, but grounded in evidence and insight.

At best, they are built from a foresight process which is divergent, creative, and collaborative. Insights are drawn together from within the organisation and from the wider ecosystem, bringing in the obvious and not so obvious ideas from a wide range of sources.

Scenarios are presented as narratives about the future that explore difference - worlds which are each plausible, distinct, clear and challenging.

These can (and should) seem deceptively simple, but there is a wealth of detail and insight, and a robust process, that lies underneath.

The end result is punchy stories that anyone can understand, and which work within your organisation's culture.

Done right, scenarios spark the urgent and important conversations within and beyond your organisation, focusing attention and enriching strategy.

Various inputs inform the development of different scenarios, and help us identify the likelihood of different elements and scenarios playing out

Potential Inputs - relevant to current disruption

Covid-19 related

Learnings from
China, Korea, Hong
Kong, Taiwan, Italy,
Spain



Industry and insight Inputs

Consumer Products
Retail
Technology
Travel/Hospitality
Automotive
Financial Services
Healthcare



Prior crises learnings

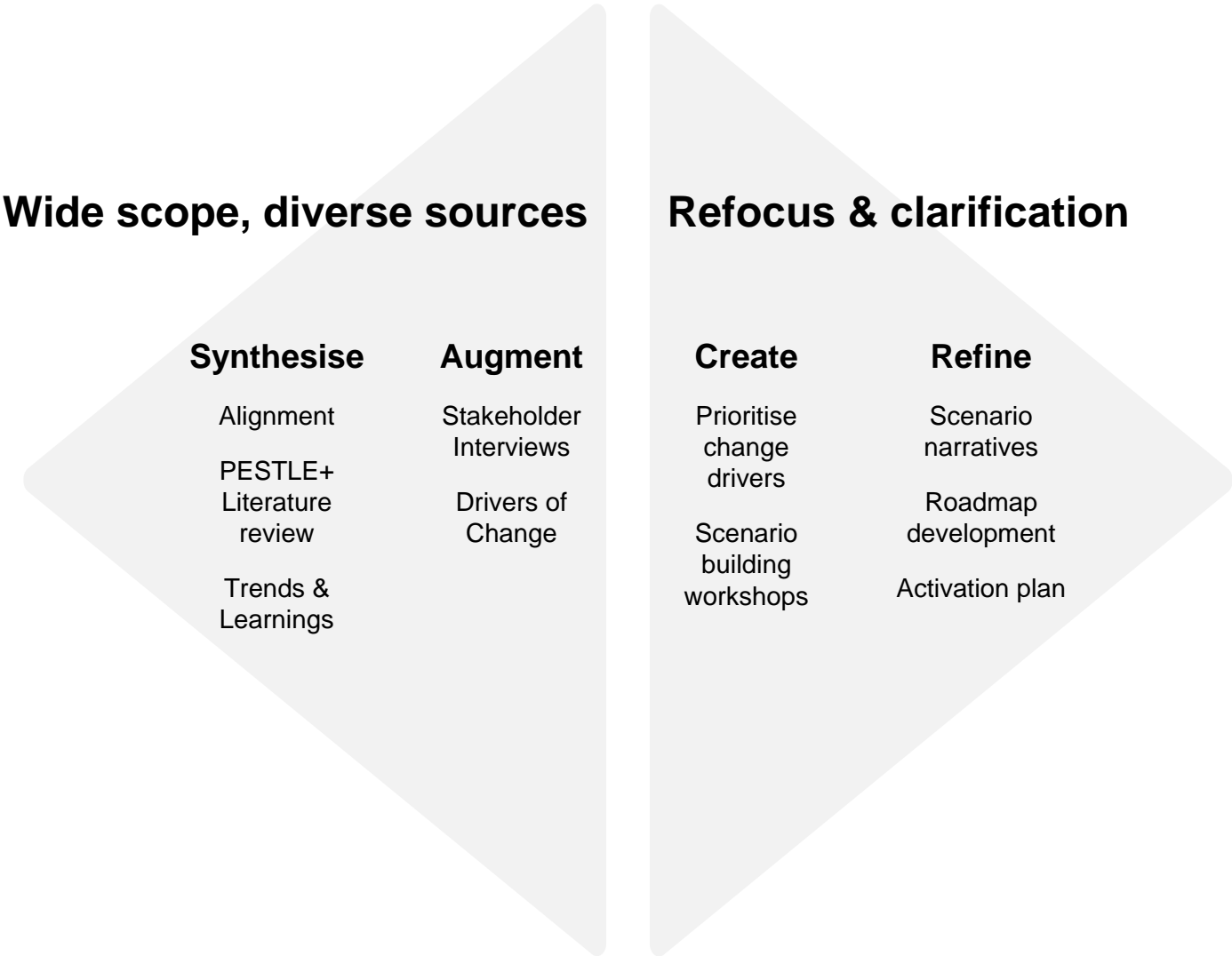
Spanish Flu Pandemic (1918-1920)
Great Depression (1929-1933)
HIV/AIDS (1981-today)
Black Monday (1987)
September 11 (2001)
SARS (2002-2003)
Global Financial Crisis (2007-2008)

Drivers of change analysis

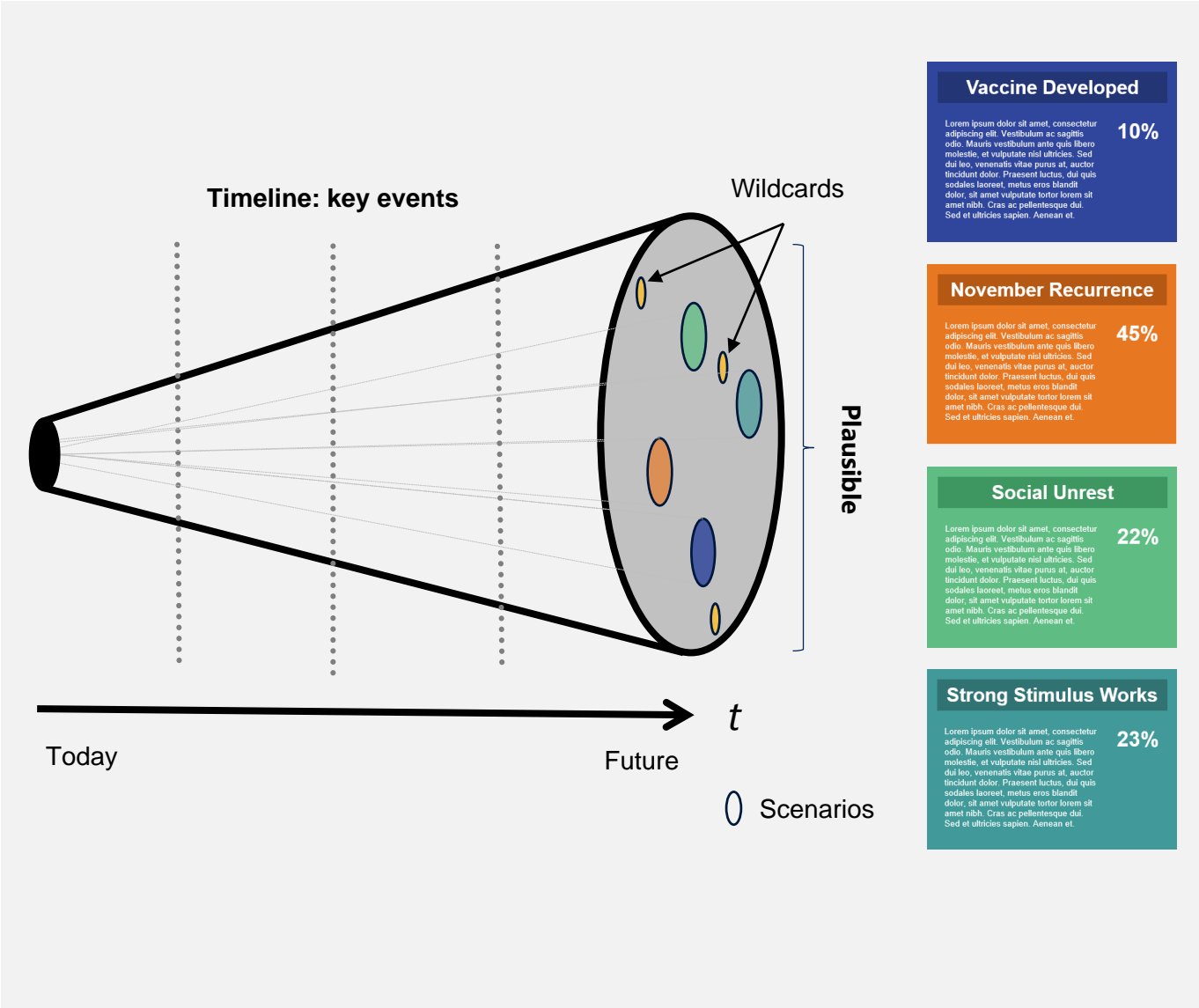


Process of building scenarios

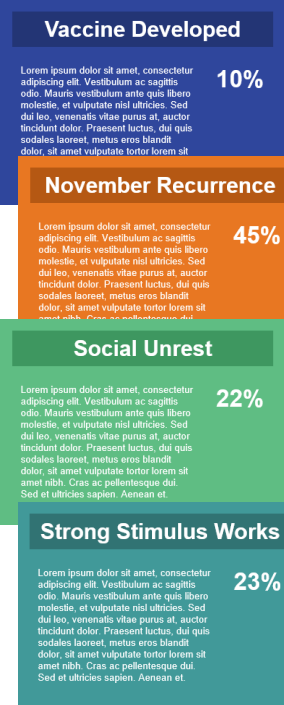
Through a series of work sessions, we'll collaboratively build a set of scenarios and their associated likelihoods, which we will continue to update as the crisis continues to unfold.



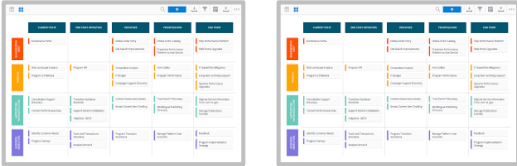
Outputs



For each scenario, we work collaboratively with you to develop a roadmap of actions and tactics that span the organisation



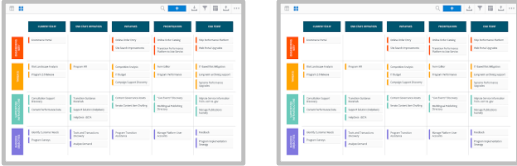
We will work with functional leads across the organisation to develop functional roadmaps



Scenario 2 Strategy Roadmap

Scenario 2 Marketing Roadmap

Scenario 2 Innovation Roadmap



Scenario 2 Channel Roadmap

Scenario 2 Supply Chain Roadmap

Scenario 2 Organisation Roadmap

Activation Plan

Each Roadmap will have a specific set of actions that can be deployed as it becomes evident which scenario will become the most likely. The reality might also become a combination of a few scenarios; our monitoring can help you identify what is changing, and pivot as needed, to ensure you are as resilient as possible as the situation unfolds.

How can I plan for multiple scenarios?

The answer

- Be prepared for a number of possible futures by devising bespoke scenarios
- Understand the decisions which will position you to win in any scenario
- Explore what to do, and what not to do, to drive towards the futures you want to see.

How

- Identify and analyse a diverse range of relevant inputs
- Development of scenarios (there are a number of ways to do this, depending on your needs)

Activation

- Collaboratively develop scenarios. The process is part of the product, as developing scenarios leads to the surfacing of key debates and priorities
- Activation workshops to build business roadmaps based on scenarios
- Narrative-led scenarios for the future of your business or policy area, with detailed roadmap and Activation Plan delivered in a strategic playbook



04

**What should I
be monitoring
and why?**



“

No single scenario will happen in its entirety.

*Each contains **ELEMENTS** of the future... but is not the future”.*

Scenarios are not one future

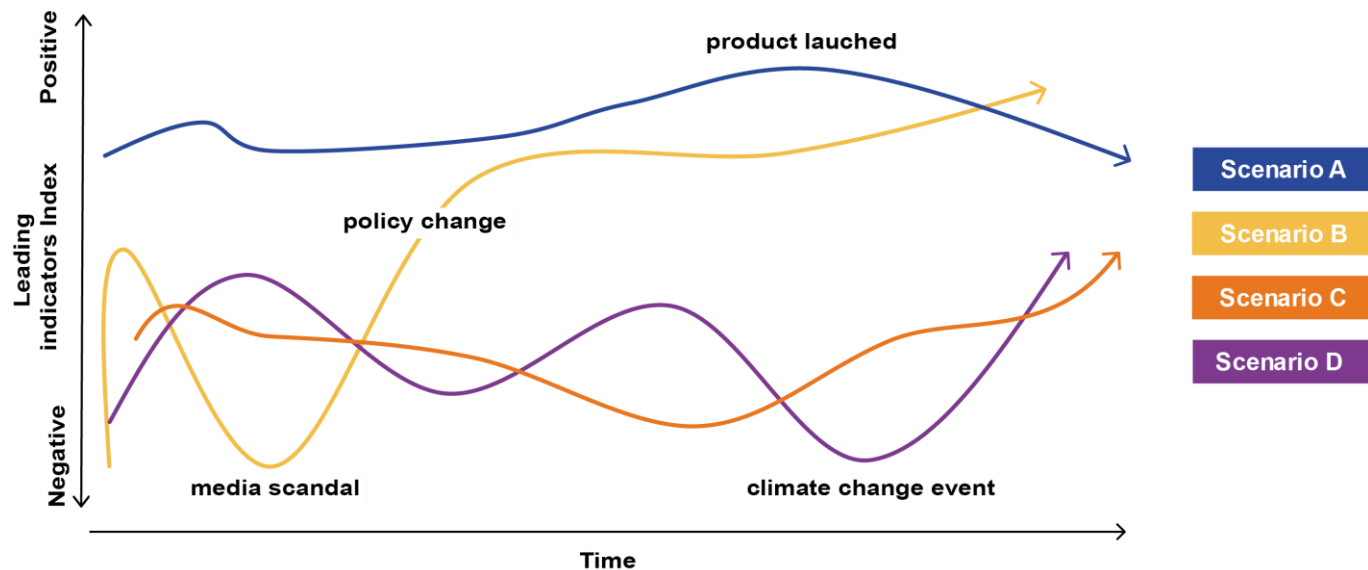
All scenarios have elements that will come true, but no single scenario is likely to happen in its entirety. They may all contain elements of the future – but none of them is the future.

It is important to identify leading indicators that we would see occurring on the way to a future scenario, and monitor how these are changing over time.

Leading indicators are a composite of many interrelated metrics, based on our theory of change (macro level measures, behavioural and attitudinal indices, consumer / societal trends and signals of change).

Leading indicators are selected and a monitoring framework is designed.

This alerts us to how far the scenarios are playing out, whether new changes are occurring and how key uncertainties are resolving.



Why is monitoring scenarios important?

The monitoring of leading indicators is used to assess and understand which elements of each scenario are playing out, how they are interacting, and to assess (based on the prevalence and depth of change) the probability of a scenario or its evolution.

By studying the interconnectedness of leading indicators, their convergence, force multipliers and cascading effects, we may also see new scenarios emerge.

This analysis and continued reference to the monitoring framework keeps the scenarios that you are pursuing at the forefront of minds. It also provides you with clarity on any change in the certainty or impact of each scenario for your organisation, thus allowing you to pivot your strategy according to the potential implications.

How do we monitor scenarios?

We start by co-creating a framework with you to understand which leading indicators to monitor, specific to the scenarios that your business is aligned behind. If scenarios don't already exist, we can work with you to create bespoke scenarios or run an Instant Futures workshop (see section 2) to understand what these could mean for your business, and then co-create a framework.

Once the framework and leading indicators have been agreed, we will look for the metrics available for monitoring, ensuring a diversity of data as well as a diversity of sources. We will also agree with you how we will monitor the metrics – for instance, qualitatively or quantitatively, and discuss how comparable individual market sources are.

With the framework defined, we will conduct tracking and reporting showing how metrics have changed, and how they might affect the leading indicators.

Metrics and leading indicators will be presented and rated using a visual index system to highlight and summarise how transformative they might prove to be for each scenario and ultimately, what this means for your business.

The framework is delivered in a report or interactive dashboard, with workshop activation, at a cadence agreed to suit business cycles.

The types of sources for input into lead indicators:

- “Hard” data sources from governments such as national statistics
- Ipsos’ own polling
- Client-owned data
- Stories from news websites and other information sources including advertising
- Established trend practices such as Trendwatching
- Social media analysis
- Other data such as Google trend analysis

Example Index dashboard

Metric 1				Metric 2			
S	Q2	Q3	Q4	S	Q2	Q3	Q4
100	107	107	102	100	122	127	127
•	▲	▶	▼	•	▲	▲	▶

Metric 3				Metric 4			
S	Q2	Q3	Q4	S	Q2	Q3	Q4
100	100	103	97	100	100	116	131
•	▶	▲	▼	•	▶	▲	▲

Lead Indicator – Scenario A			
S	Q2	Q3	Q4
100	107	113	114
-	7%	5%	1%

How can monitoring frameworks help us?

The answer

- The analysis of and continued reference to key indicators keeps the scenarios that you are pursuing at the forefront of minds. It also provides you with clarity on any change in the certainty or impact of each scenario for your organisation, thus allowing you to pivot your strategy according to the potential strategic implications.
-

How

- Co-creation of a monitoring framework and agreement of leading indicators and driving metrics to monitor. Tracking and showing how metrics have changed, how they might affect the leading indicators and a summary of how transformative they might prove to be for each scenario and ultimately, what this means for your business.
-

Activation

- The framework is delivered in a report or live digital monitoring framework, with workshop activation to work through the implications for your business, at a cadence agreed to suit business cycles.

05

**Who do I speak to
about futures at
Ipsos?**



About Futures at Ipsos

Ipsos' Futures Advisory Board: who are we?

We are a network of trends and futures experts spread across continents, with significant presences in London, Paris, New York, Chicago, Hong Kong and Ottawa.

Each centre contributes different perspectives and expertise to our overall knowledge. Our global spread ensures cultural divergences in views are well-represented. It also ensures that we use a wide net to capture emerging signals of the future, wherever they occur.

- **We conduct foresight research for a range of clients**, helping governments and businesses to plan for uncertainty and create strategies for the future
- A mixture of diverse talents: from quantitative specialists to strategic consultants
- We also complement existing Ipsos teams, lending foresight experience across sectors and industries
- For more information, please see the next page for your local expert contacts.

Your key contacts

The question	Ipsos service	Contact
1 How will our values change over time?	TrendTRAC linking Ipsos Global Trends with Covid-19 signals	
2 How different will the future be from what went before?	Instant Future: Worlds Afterwards	
3 How can I plan for multiple scenarios?	Bespoke Horizon Scans and Scenario Building – grounded in Ipsos’ proprietary frameworks	<u>FuturesAdvisoryBoard@ipsos.com</u>
4 What should I be monitoring and why?	Monitoring frameworks and tracking	

Thank you

For more information contact:

FuturesAdvisoryBoard@ipsos.com

