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Scenario Tools to Maximize Equity & Impact

Webinar for The Dibble Institute

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Project Evident harnesses the power of evidence for greater impact.

We believe that by empowering practitioners to drive their own evidence building and strengthening the surrounding ecosystem, we can increase the number of effective solutions in the social sector and scale them faster—ultimately producing better outcomes for communities.

The most precious commodity in a crisis is time.

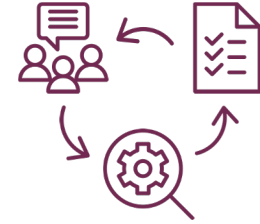Scenario planning buys you time in advance of urgency.

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What is Scenario Planning?

Annual Planning

- Plan for a single future
- "One and done"
- Internally focused
- Created by leadership
- Lower prospect of change

Scenario Planning

- Plan for multiple futures
- Iterative
- Externally focused
- Strength in diversity of perspectives
- Higher prospect of change

Start Powerfully

Amplify underrepresented voices
Whose perspective, expertise, or lived experience will deepen your knowledge of the future?
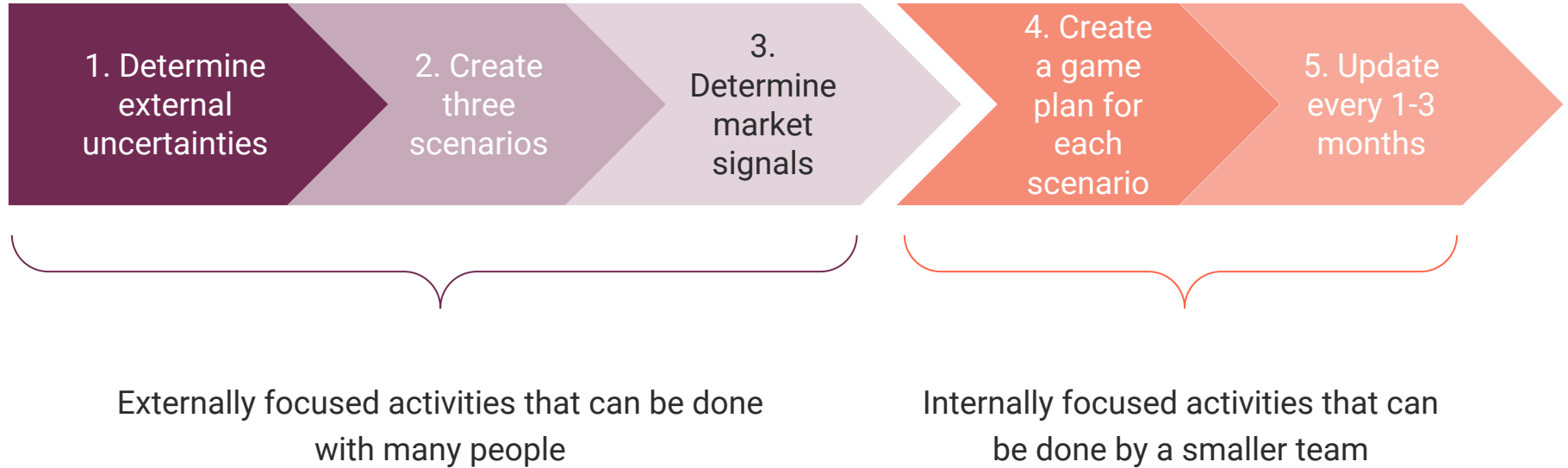
Onramp for change
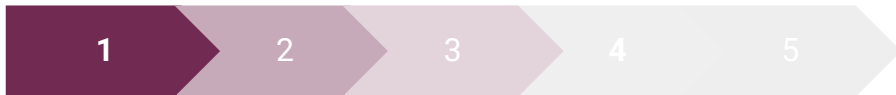Informal leaders are your most powerful agents of change to help lead strategy adaptation or "pivots."

Five times five ways communication
Keep the team and stakeholders in the loop through planned ongoing communication.

The Basics of Scenario Planning

1. Determine external uncertainties → 2. Create three scenarios → 3. Determine market signals

4. Create a game plan for each scenario → 5. Update every 1-3 months

Externally focused activities that can be done with many people

Internally focused activities that can be done by a smaller team

The Basics of Scenario Planning

1. Determine external uncertainties

- Uncertainties are factors over which you have no control

- Include financial *and* program uncertainties

2. Create three scenarios

- Anchor scenarios on a key uncertainty that will impact your organization

- Look for patterns across all scenarios. Are there elements of your work you have to change regardless of the weather?

3. Determine market signals

- Market signals help you know which scenario is materializing

- Look for lead and lag indicators for market change

Aligning Your "Theory of Change"

- Which activities are possible and which are no longer possible?

- Surface implicit assumptions embedded within your theory of change:
  - How your staff works together?
  - Availability and safety of public transit?
  - The mental health and wellness of your program participants?

- Assess the activities and implicit assumptions that are no longer true due changes in context
  - Brainstorm new hypotheses for activities or assumptions that could substitute for those that are no longer true
  - Are there short- or medium-term outcomes that need to hibernate?

The Basics of Scenario Planning

4. Create a game plan for each scenario
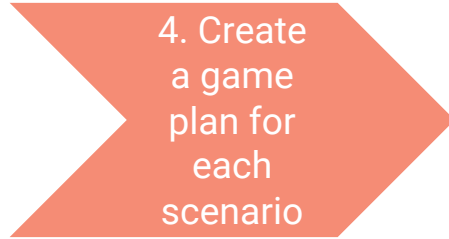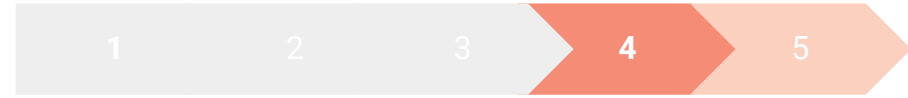
- Review your theory of change/program logic model/strategy. What has to hibernate? Are there new opportunities?
- Are there different capabilities needed due to hibernation of new opportunities?
- What is your learning agenda for any innovation?
- What is the budget to support the revised program and strategy?

5. Update every 1-3 months

- Assign responsibility for reviewing market signals monthly
- Update scenarios every 1-3 months

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