

Lecture by

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Foresight and Design as a New Paradigm in Dealing with Complexity in this Hyperconnected World.

Presentation Abstract

Organizations – most typically, have been operating on the assumption of continuity, that no significant disruption would occur before the time horizon. That was a pretty good assumption in the pre-Internet world, but it has become increasingly risky as the pace of change has quickened and the increased connectivity of the globalized world connects people and issues as never before. Derived from cross-disciplinary insights in Foresight and Design studies, the hypotheses around the broader role of the strategic design conversation, is to include systematic futures thinking as a transformational approach to producing visions of desirable and sustainable product-service system futures. This presentation will illuminate how foresight with design and design with foresight can inform organizational strategic innovation decision-making with creativity, visualization and prototyping capabilities. Specifically, the aim in whole systems design foresight is to highlight the interconnecting aspects of strategic foresight and design, and expand the conversation to include design principles in strategic foresight processes in order to transform individual experiences, frameworks and perspectives into a shared, understandable, and an actionable area of insight into the future. Resulting from theoretical and applied field research in diverse industry context, a series of conceptual 'high-level' futures thinking factors were identified: (1) Achieving insights and alignment around current reality; (2) Facilitating a productive Design conversation; (3) Specifying a portfolio of desirable futures; and (4) Active experimentation to gather new knowledge and learning. Consequently, the purpose of this presentation is to make the case that decision makers need to rely on a new, emerging approach to the future in the increasing turbulent environments they face today. To this end, the foresight and design disciplines provide a new paradigm to approach the future that takes the uncertainties and opportunities of the current VUCA world into account.

Key Highlights

1. Traditionally, forecasting and planning techniques were extrapolative, and based on the assumption of continuity that no significant disruption would occur before the time horizon.
2. The Internet has brought connectivity of the globalized world, connecting people and issues at an increasing pace as never before.
3. Professional futurists develop hypothetical scenarios for decision makers to prepare for a different future than the one expected.
4. Professional designers of products and services develop new techniques and visualization tools to assist decision makers in envisioning new opportunities.
5. Combining creativity, visualization, and analysis methods and techniques found in design and foresight presents a new approach (paradigm) in support of strategic decision-making in an age of uncertainty, and a rapidly advancing information environment.



About the author

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Dr. Jörn Bühring is currently Assistant Professor and faculty member at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, School of Design, where he is advancing a research culture that is cooperative, innovative, and highly impact focused. This collaborative approach (cf. Design Economies, Ignite Innovation) brings academia, designers, and business stakeholders together to develop high-impact design knowledge, concepts, and forward-looking solutions. Dr. Bühring's research explores Design Foresight, Vision and Fiction techniques as emerging processes within Strategic Design, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Management. A full member of the "World Futures Studies Federation" (www.wfsf.org), he has conducted since 2010 several major futures studies in luxury hospitality (2020), Omni-channel retailing (2020), and within the Financial Services sector, he has been leading a series of industry funded futures studies in Wealth Management and Private Banking to the year 2030. With emphasis placed on consumer-centred value innovation driving new markets, his research interests expand toward experiential human engagement propositions in form of service-centric user experience design concepts. Active across international markets, he collaborates with leading Universities in research and design-led innovation; Dr. Bühring also holds an honorary Adjunct Associate Professor position within the College of Business at RMIT University in Australia.

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