

# FUTURISM FOR BUSINESS

## EXERCISE PACK

**BASED ON THE APPLIED FUTURIST'S TOOLKIT**



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# WHAT IS FUTURISM FOR BUSINESS?

We all live and work in an accelerated world, where high-frequency change presents new threats to our organisations, but also new opportunities. This course introduces the concept of 'Applied Futurism', a collection of tools designed to help you and your organisation deal with rapid change more effectively by identifying and responding to existential threats and exponential opportunities.

At the end of this course you should have a collection of tools that you can apply in your day to day working life to help you plan ahead more effectively, prioritise critical actions, and communicate their importance.

You can also use these tools in specific projects such as:

- Facilitating foresight and planning workshops for your colleagues or clients
- Creating thought-leadership content about the future of your industry
- Developing strategies to address the coming changes

In this training course we won't address the full depth of the Applied Futurist's Toolkit, though you will be provided with online access to all the tools for up to three months following your course. Instead, the agenda is designed to give you some of the most practical elements that you can take away and immediately apply.

# AGENDA

- 09:00 Arrival & coffee
- 09:30 Introductions
- 09:45 High Frequency Change explained
- 10:30 Being Future-Ready: Building Athletic Organisations
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 Foresight: short, medium, and long-term planning
- 13:00 Lunch
- 13:30 Accelerating decision-making (Strategic & Operational)
- 14:30 Structuring for agility
- 15:30 Your next steps (action plan)
- 16:30 Close

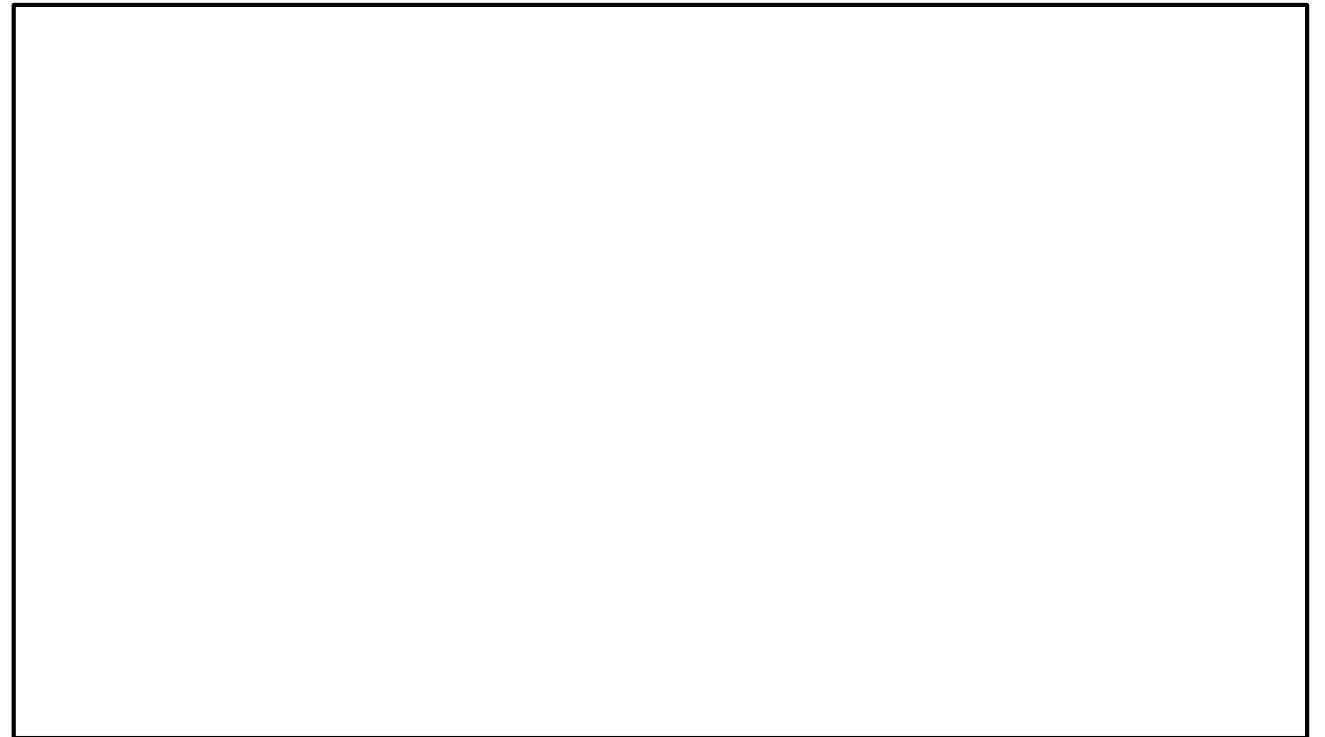
# EXERCISE 1: PRESSURE POINTS

Change is most likely to come in places where there is already pressure building in your organisation. Finding these Pressure Points is vital for effective futurism, but it's also a really useful skill for day-to-day business. If you can identify pressures and propose solutions, you will be highly valued by clients and colleagues.

*Consider:*

- *What frustrates you most at work?*
- *What stops you doing your best work each day?*
- *What are your colleagues' biggest gripes and concerns?*
- *What are your customers' biggest complaints?*
- *What keeps your chief executive up at night?*

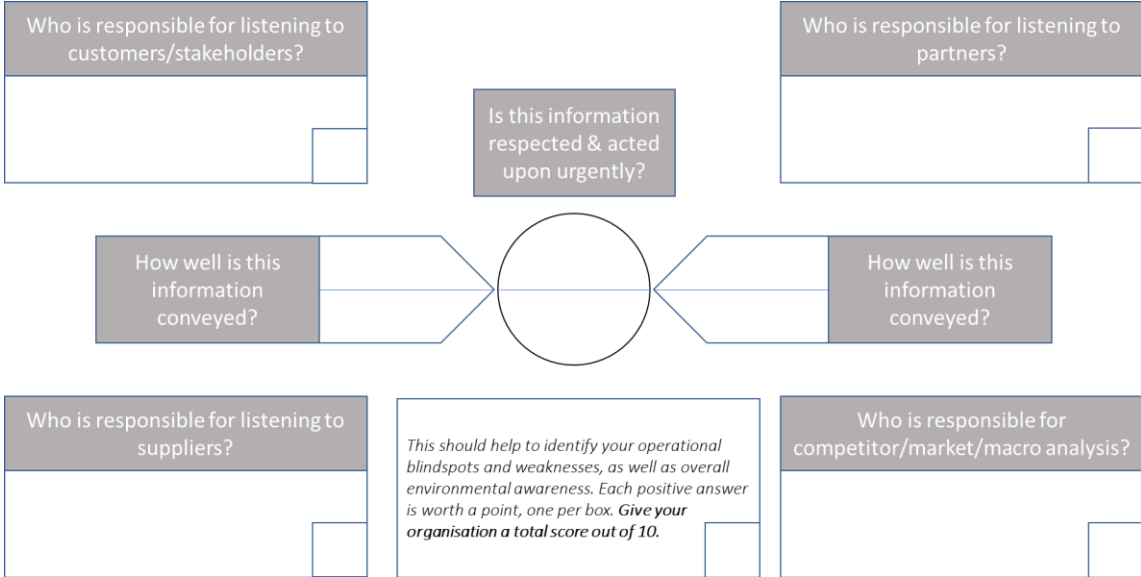
**Examples:** Process / Technology / Politics / Decision-making / Information / Service / Responsiveness / Finance / Investment / Margins / Space / Staffing



# EXERCISE 2: AWARENESS

Future-ready organisations have acute awareness of their immediate environment: customer, partner and stakeholder analysis, both quantitative and qualitative. What are your listening processes?

On the next sheet is a full-sized version of this questionnaire to fill out for your organisation.



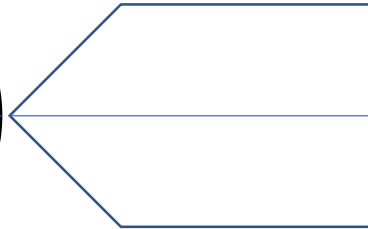
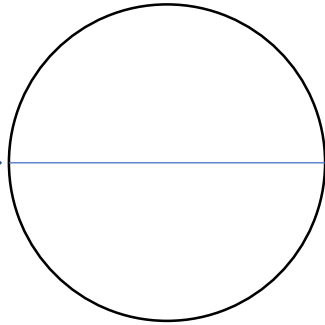
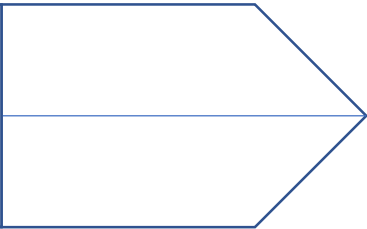
### 3: MAP ENVIRONMENTAL SENSE

Who is responsible for listening to customers/stakeholders?
<input type="checkbox"/>

Who is responsible for listening to partners?
<input type="checkbox"/>

Is this information respected & acted upon urgently?

How well is this information conveyed?



How well is this information conveyed?

Who is responsible for listening to suppliers?
<input type="checkbox"/>

*This should help to identify your operational blindspots and weaknesses, as well as overall environmental awareness. Each positive answer is worth a point, one per box. Give your organisation a total score out of 10.*

Who is responsible for competitor/market/macro analysis?
<input type="checkbox"/>

# 4: FORESIGHT AND STRATEGIC SENSE

	ONE YEAR	TWO-FIVE YEARS	TEN YEARS & BEYOND
What is your foresight/planning process for this period?			
How frequently is it conducted?			
Who is involved?			
What information sources does it draw from?			

## 5: SHIBBOLETHS

Every industry has its ‘shibboleths’: outdated ideas to which it clings. High Frequency Change is most dramatic when it undermines these shared principles that incumbents refuse to question.

Shibboleths are usually unspoken, but when expressed often take forms like:

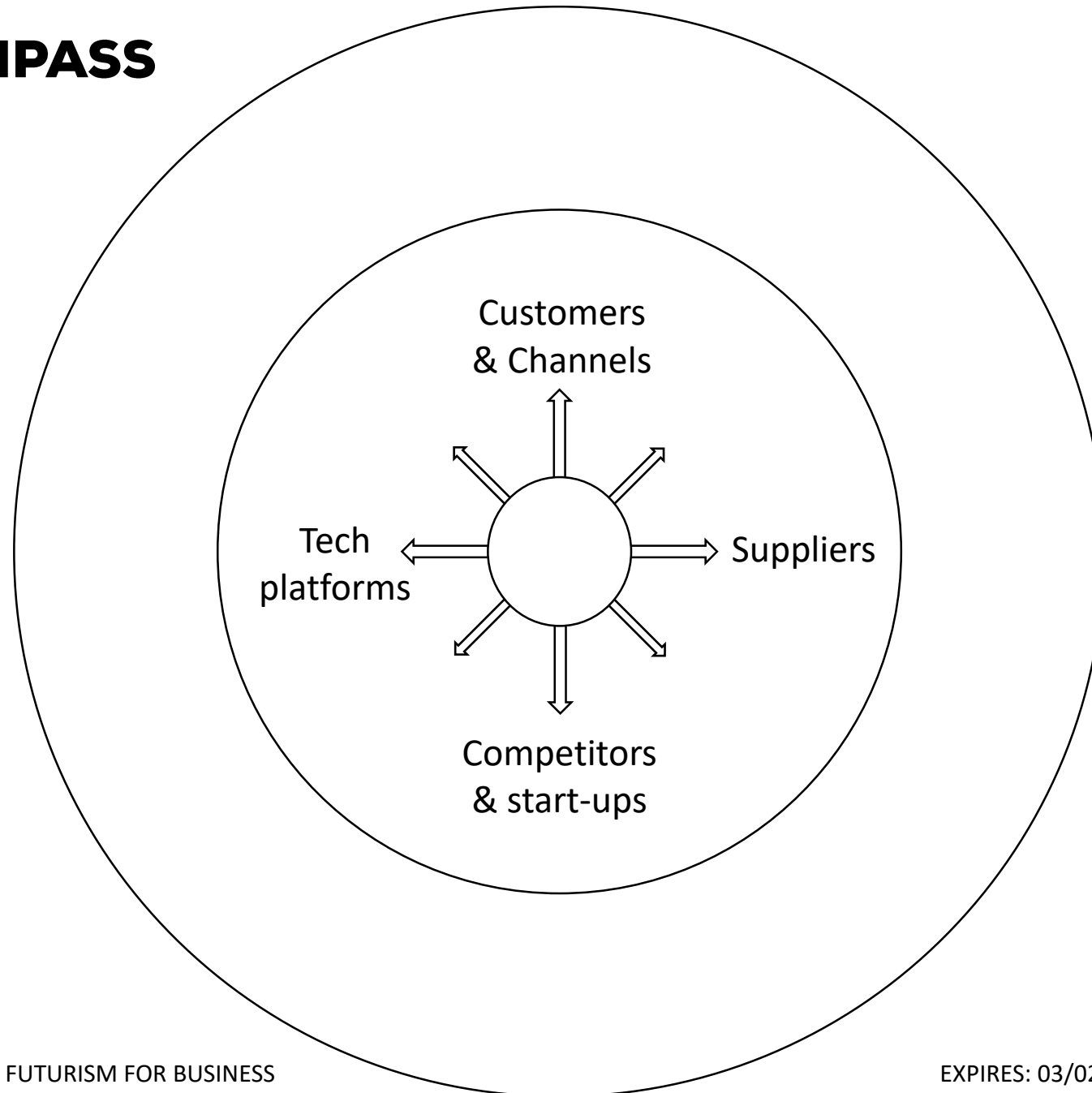
- “This industry is different because...”
- “Customers want someone they know and trust”
- “Customers love this service – why would they want something else?”

***What are your industry’s shibboleths? What is to stop them being disrupted?***





# 6: CHOICE COMPASS



# 7: INTERSECTIONS

*In considering the near term we need to think beyond trends and look at who might take advantage of them, and where they might affect us specifically.*

SOURCE
<i>Where is the threat/opportunity coming from?</i>

SUBSTANCE
<i>What is the nature of the threat/opportunity?</i>

STRIKE
<i>Why and where will it affect you?</i>

**Source:** consider the choice compass. Challenges come from many more directions now.  
**Substance:** Think about speed and power, in product and service.  
**Strike:** What are the points of friction in your organisation/sector that this might attack?

# INTERSECTIONS

*Use this table to capture lots of intersections: fill out strike points along the top grey row, and sources down the left. Use the intersecting boxes for the substance.*

		STRIKE				
SOURCE						

# PRIORITISING

Foresight exercises can throw up a lot of potential avenues, which can make filtering hard. Getting a consensus of opinions – from inside and outside your organisation - as to where potential changes sit on this chart, can be helpful.

