



# Outsider in the Mix

*This activity is adapted from resources by Seth Kahan.*

Use this method to practice engaging with strategists and outliers as part of your strategic foresight.

**Benefit:** Bolstering your strategy's likelihood for success by expanding your outlook and accounting for varying ideas, experiences and opinions. This is a chance to either corroborate what you know to be true or uncover what you must do to adjust your approach.

**When to do it:** When you need to shake things up and get a new perspective, especially a member perspective. This is useful when looking to bring in someone who's not part of the usual team of brainstormers — someone with a contrarian, contrasting or fresh perspective.

**What to do:** Invite someone to sit down with you and your team to discuss the questions below. After you discuss the questions, initiate a conversation with the outsider's perspective as your focus. Set the stage by clarifying that this is a time for you and your team to listen. Your objective isn't to argue with the outsider, or even reach a consensus. The purpose of the interaction is to receive the outsider's opinions, thoughts and reactions.

This kind of exercise can range in scope. It can be as simple as taking someone to lunch, or as formal as organizing an extended retreat to analyze and understand an outsider's contrasting perspective.

## Questions to ask:

1. What do you see coming on the horizon that will most impact our organization, for better or worse?
2. What can be done to exploit that opportunity or mitigate that problem?
3. Given that emerging trend, what would you do if you were in my situation?

## Questions to consider when choosing an "outsider":

1. Why is this person an expert? What kind of background do they have? What ideologies do they subscribe to? How has their attitude brought them success?
2. What do you expect their perspective will be? Bring this up during the meeting. Be prepared for them to hold a surprisingly different opinion than you assumed.
3. Probe further and more deeply to ensure you understand their thinking. Why do they have the perspective they do?

