

The Negotiation Society

THE FUTURE ISSUE

HUMAN VS MACHINE

A battle for supremacy

US ELECTION SPECIAL

The candidates' negotiation styles

A NOVEL APPROACH

The negotiation journey of a book

THE FUTURE OF HUMANKIND

What role could negotiation play?



A MAN WITH A PLAN

The new CEO of The Gap Partnership lays out his vision for the future

QUESTION TIME

With companies from Procter & Gamble to General Motors to Intel hiring futurists, foresight and trend analysis is becoming firmly embedded in the corporate world. And little wonder – knowing what might be around the corner can provide a huge commercial advantage to firms, individuals...and, of course, negotiators.

To get ahead of the game, we asked a group of futurists from around the world to answer the question, “What future scenarios do you envisage in your area by 2030?”



Dr. Amy Zalman

CEO AND FOUNDER OF STRATEGIC FORESIGHT CONSULTANCY PRESCIENT

As a futurist, my area is Strategic Foresight, a management discipline that helps people and institutions plan for complex, uncertain and distant futures. How will the practice of foresight change in the next decade or so, and how might the people in firms, governments and communities begin to plan differently?

First, there is a growing recognition now that leaders and organizations need to approach planning and organizational change differently. The premise that the future will be different from the past, once an abstraction, is becoming a palpable reality in the workplace, in our daily lives, in our politics and civic lives, in our natural environment. The scale of change introduced by artificial intelligence and through connected devices promises to be immense, in ways both productive and harmful.

Leaders and organizations are in the process of waking up to this fact, and there is, as a result growing interest in the mindsets and toolkits that futurists use. By 2030, there is likely to be an even broader and more intense understanding that we – all of us – are living through a transformative moment. People may respond by shying away from change, but there will be greater will to understand and adapt to change.

Second, artificial intelligence is likely to play a larger role in planning. Analytics will have grown more nuanced in offering predictive insights about communities or customers, and many decisions will be based on patterns found in massive data sets. We will all have to make decisions about the benefits and drawback of algorithm-based planning, and to grow literate in the new versions of planning this engenders.



Shara Evans

FUTURIST KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Researchers are predicting that within a few years digital assistants such as Alexa, Google and Siri will routinely analyze conversations to provide relationship advice, and with the help of genetic matching even predict chemistry and compatibility between people looking for a partner. This type of AI-based analysis is likely to make its way into the business world: imagine having a conversation with a business prospect and your personal AI sends you prompts through your augmented reality glasses on the best way to “seal the deal”.

We’ll see advances in health-related technologies, with precision medicine enabled by genetic research, nanotech-driven cures, preventive therapies, and tiny robots capable of performing surgery deep within our bodies, autonomously or guided by doctors. Wearables – machines buried deep within our bodies – will provide real-time telemetry of everything happening inside of us. Many of these technologies are being experimented with in labs right now and will be ready by the mid-2030s.

Voice interfaces are going to be commonplace, and kids will be perplexed when they encounter something that doesn’t talk back to them! Image recognition is rapidly making its way into our everyday world – from facial recognition to unlock our smartphones to state-based surveillance of our every move. We’ll continue to generate massive data sets from our phones, computers, gadgets and everything we do. People and companies will be looking to monetize this information, or more nefariously use it for criminal purposes.

There are many exciting technologies on the horizon. It’s up to us to decide when, where and how we will deploy them. This is the time and place to stand back and take stock of the future we want to build for humanity.



Maree Conway

FORESIGHT PRACTITIONER AND STRATEGIC ADVISOR, THINKING FUTURES

One of my specialist areas of foresight is further education. I can see four possible futures for the university in 2030.

The corporate university

A linear, business as usual projection of today, where the university continues to be a corporate and controlled public institution, with no real ability to shape its future.

The academic university

More a hope than a possibility – where the traditional and deeply held belief in the university’s social purpose resurfaces, and the right to determine what a university does returns to the academic.

The alternative university

New structures and processes are already being established outside today’s higher education system. These universities share the belief of the second possible future around the university’s social purpose but here academics have decided that they won’t ‘play the game’ and have moved outside the system.

The digital university

A projection of today, one where technology is part of the design and operations of universities. It rejects old ways of teaching and seeks two-way real time interaction with students.

There is a final possible future, emerging from a trend towards seeing university education as having little relevance in today’s world – too expensive, unnecessary and a waste of time. In this future, there are no universities.

It’s unlikely that any of these possible futures will emerge as I’ve described there. Instead, we need to take a futures stance to better understand today’s shifting context for universities to respond proactively to shape change rather than end up having no choice but to react to it. >