

Future Back

Problem

How to create a strategy?

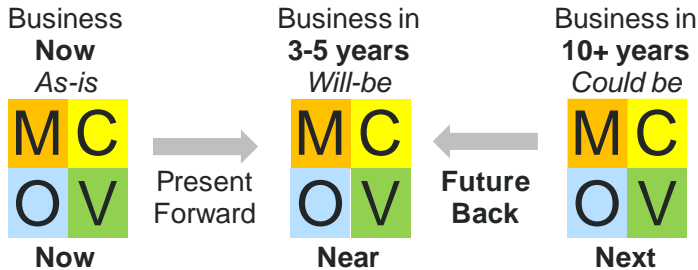
Difficulty

Some training required

- **Future-back** (or **backcasting**) is a strategy development tool.
- “Present-forward” leaders incrementally improve the current state based on forecasts. “Future-back” leaders visualize a future state and then pursue it.
- Future-back thinking *complements* present-forward thinking; it does not replace it.

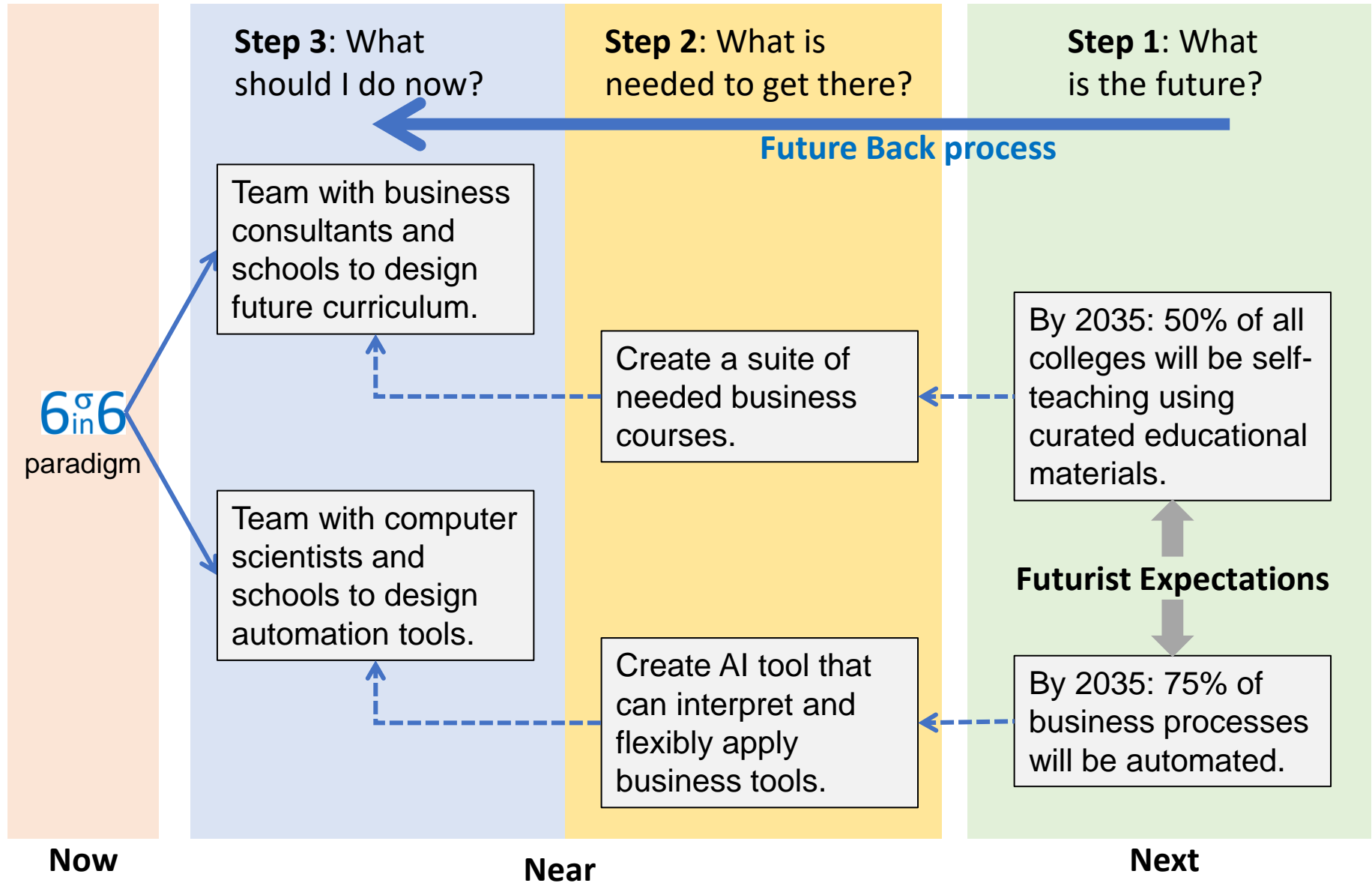


1. Imagine the desired/ideal future state (“moonshot”)
 - It does not need to be achievable with today’s technology and financial resources.
 - Each future state is detailed with a date.
 - Select 2 to 5 future states; not all the desired future states will materialize.
2. Convert the vision to strategy
 - Chart a path to each future state.
 - Set achievable goals.
 - Obtain management buy in.
 - List the milestones along the path.
3. Focus on the first milestone and get started
 - Perform course corrections, as needed
 - Pivot as needed; cancel the effort if needed



M = Mission
C = Customers
O = Operations
V = Value proposition

Future Back – Example – Future of 6in6 paradigm



Future Back – Notes

Slide 1

1. The vision of the future should be about 10 years out; far enough for wild changes, soon enough that action is required now.
2. A future vision can be obtained by projecting key trends forward.
3. For Future Back success, there need to be many discussions with the leadership team. Their managerial and financial support is key.
4. Future Back planning is appropriate when
 - A. Addressing problems that are very broad in scope
 - B. Developing a disruptive, out-of-the-box, product or service
 - C. Incremental changes are inadequate
 - D. Reinventing a core business capability
 - E. There is too much industry-wide “group think”
5. Future Back is similar to gap analysis (see the 6in6 presentation).

Slide 2

1. This example is relevant if the 6in6 author wanted the 6in6 paradigm continues to exist – perhaps modified – far into the future.
2. For each of the future visions, the immediate task is the same – team with outside professionals. This recognizes the current small size and influence of the 6in6 effort.