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Author: Ms. Kaori Becerril
Designers in Space Community, Mexico

Ms. Lee Anderson
KPMG, United States

FUTURES THINKING: A MINDSET FOR DRIVING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION IN
NEWSPACE

Abstract

The 21st century will be marked by every person on Earth recognizing their position as a stakeholder in our collective off-planet activities. While stakeholder awareness is expanding, influence and decision making is still consolidated. This major shift is happening in a landscape of accelerated change in which societal, economic, environmental, and political drivers collide with technological advancements to create new challenges. Furthermore, these transformations are exponentially increasing in ever-shorter intervals of time. Experts across disciplines have adopted an acronym for the current business environment coined by the U.S. military to describe chaotic situations: VUCA, which stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Leading organizations in these volatile and complex times require new approaches and mindsets. An instrument for building resilience, adaptability and opportunity through recognition of emerging is needed to gain better visibility while making decisions that will impact our shared future. For this, Futures Thinking is the instrument for which Strategic Foresight provides the framework. While there have been efforts in the space community to adopt Futures Thinking to envision future possibilities, there is an opportunity to leverage Strategic Foresight further. By analyzing trends in the external environment, Strategic Foresight enables us to develop informed maps of the emerging landscape. These well-informed maps of the future allow us to test our current strategy, develop breakthrough innovations, and create transformative change. Strategic Foresight aims to make informed and intentional choices based on potential outcomes, without predicting the future. It surfaces risks and opportunities by engaging diverse voices in the process. This paper examines the application of Futures Thinking and Strategic Foresight in the field of space activities, specifically for military, exploration, and commercial purposes. We will delve into the history of utilizing Futures Thinking in these areas, and highlight the importance of applying Strategic Foresight in the current landscape of space exploration, geopolitical shifts, and economic development. This is especially relevant for companies that are poised to shape the future, as they must adopt a mindset of strategic Foresight to succeed.