Wind Tunneling

Wind Tunneling stress-tests strategic options against various future scenarios. Like testing an aircraft in a wind tunnel, this exercise identifies vulnerabilities and strengthens strategic resilience. It's about seeing how your plans hold up under pressure.

2 hours

Service Design Tools

Intermediate

H HOW TO RUN

1 Strategy Definition — 20 min

Clearly define 2-4 strategic options.

- Define key assumptions.
- Identify critical success factors.
- Document expected outcomes and metrics.

2 Scenario Review — 15 min

Briefly review 3-4 scenarios (from prior planning).

- Ensure understanding of each scenario.
- Highlight key differences.

3 Strategy Testing — 1 hr

For each strategy-scenario combination:

- How would this strategy perform?
- What assumptions are challenged?
- What are the likely outcomes?
- What could go wrong (or better)?
- Score performance (1-5 scale).
- Document risks and opportunities.

4 Pattern Analysis — 15 min

Identify robust strategies (perform well across scenarios).

- Find strategies that excel in specific scenarios.
- Highlight vulnerabilities.
- Look for strategies that fail.

5 Strategy Optimization — 10 min

Modify strategies to address vulnerabilities.

- Add adaptive features or contingency triggers.
- Consider hybrid approaches.
- Plan monitoring for scenario indicators.

KEY TIP

This exercise works best with: Completed scenario planning.

O OBJECTIVES

- Test strategic options against multiple future scenarios
- Identify strategy vulnerabilities and failure points
- Develop more robust and adaptive strategies
- Understand which strategies work across different futures
- Create contingency plans for various scenarios
- Build confidence in strategic choices

M MATERIALS

- ☐ Strategy descriptions.
- ☐ Scenario summaries.
- ☐ Strategy testing matrix template.
- ☐ Performance criteria.
- ☐ Scoring guides.
- ☐ Risk and opportunity capture sheets.
- ☐ Digital collaboration tools or flip charts.

P PARTICIPANTS

4 to 8 people

F FACILITATOR NOTES

REMEMBER

- Well-defined strategic options.
- Clear success criteria. Be tough on the strategies.
- Push them to their breaking points.
- Consider implementation challenges.
- Don't let preferences bias assessment.
- Look for strategies to perform differently across scenarios.
- The goal is actionable insights, not perfection. I've seen groups struggle with overly optimistic scoring, so encourage critical evaluation.
- For virtual sessions: Use breakout rooms.
- Create shared scoring matrices.
- Use polling for assessments.
- Document insights in real-time.