Quantumrun Foresight methodology overview

Helping clients thrive from future trends

QUANTUMRUN
FORESIGHT

Inside this methodology overview
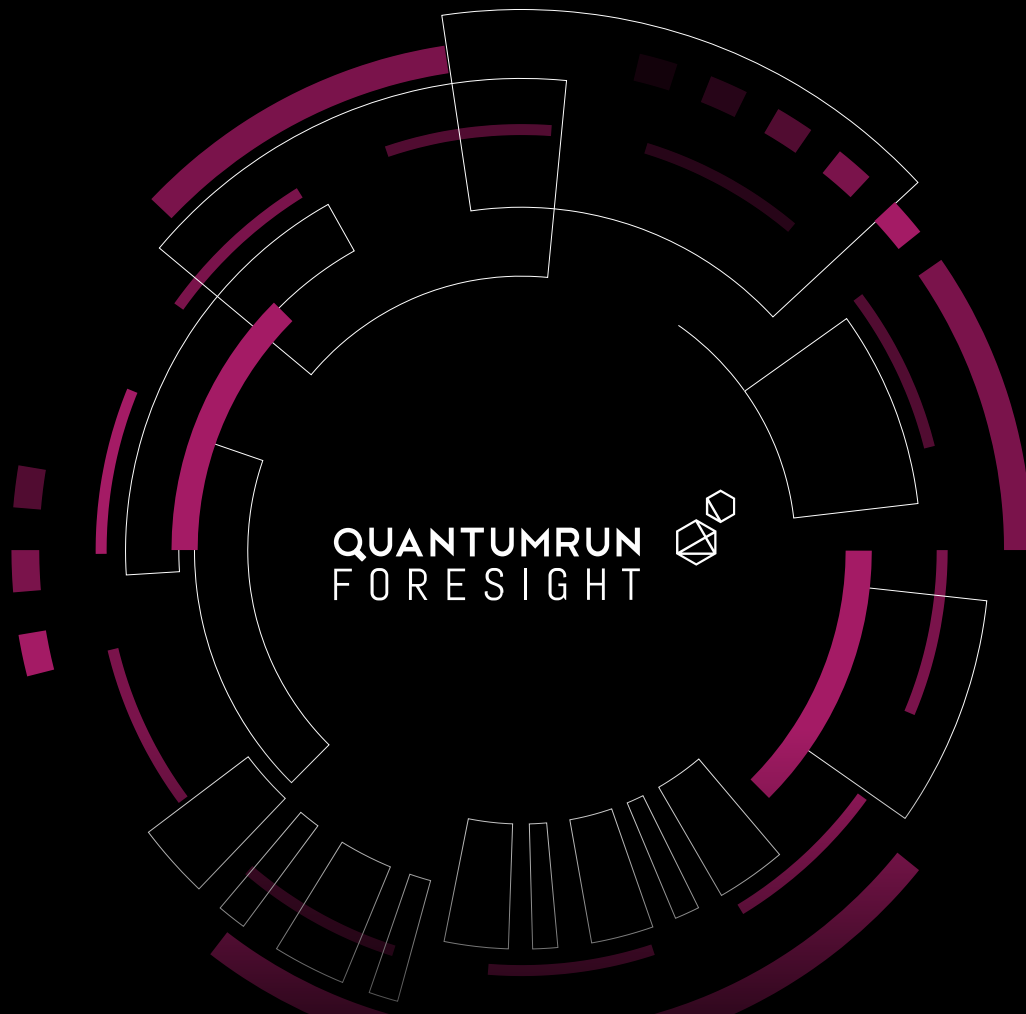
QUANTUMRUN
F O R E S I G H T

Why foresight matters

Organizations engage with Quantumrun Foresight to:

Collect inspiration from future trends to ideate new products, services, policies, and business model ideas they can invest in today.

Identify future solutions to complex present-day challenges in order to implement inventive and actionable policies.

Explore plausible future (five, 10, 20 years+) business scenarios they may operate in and identify feasible courses of action for success in these future environments.

Research the technologies and startups/partners necessary to build and launch a future business idea or a future vision for their market or business.

Collect market intelligence about emerging trends happening in industries outside their area of expertise that may directly or indirectly impact their operations.

Establish early warning systems to prepare for market disruptions.

Strategic Foresight

Strategic foresight is a quantitative and qualitative discipline that empowers individuals and organizations by improving their preparedness for the various scenarios they may experience in the near and distant future.

This discipline enables practitioners to identify disruptive and transformative forces that will influence future events, affording them systematic foresight of possible, plausible, and probable futures, and ultimately allowing them to select one preferred future to pursue strategically.
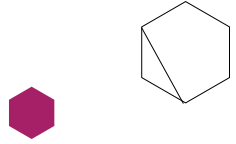
Methodology

Quantumrun Foresight's international team of analysts monitors and reviews news, journals and research reports from a wide range of industries. We regularly interview and survey our large network of experts to gather on-the-ground observations from their particular fields. After integrating and assessing these insights on the Quantumrun Foresight Platform, we then make informed, multidisciplinary, and comprehensive forecasts about future trends and scenarios.
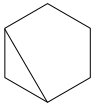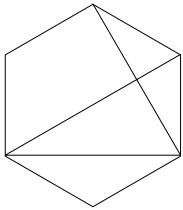
The methodology Quantumrun applies to projects is always customized to the needs, budget, and timelines of our clients. However, this table offers an overview of our standardized process.
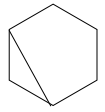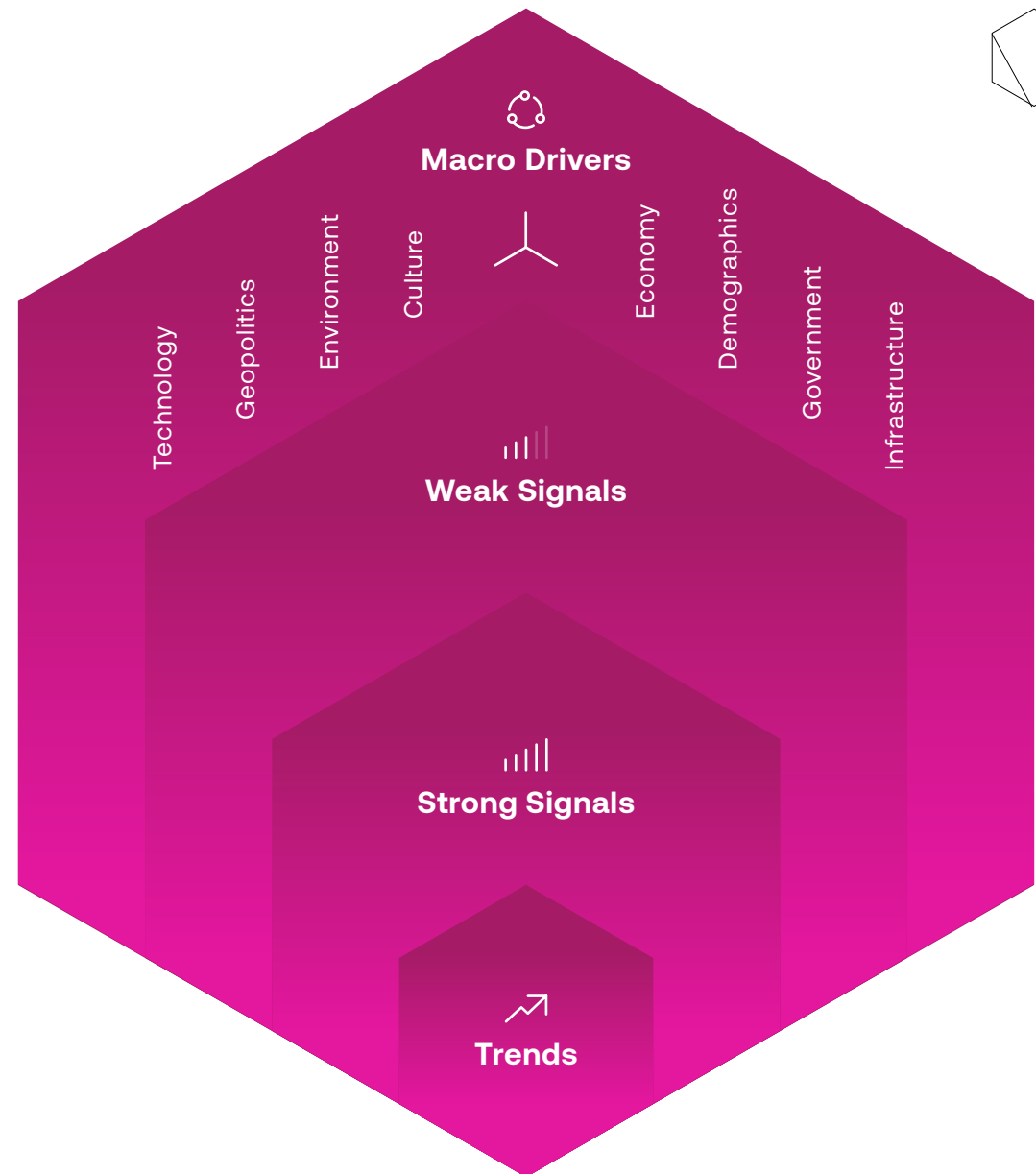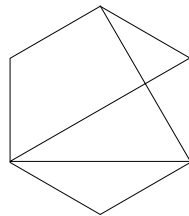
STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Framing	Scope the project: Purpose, objectives, stakeholders, timelines, budget, deliverables; assess current state vs preferred future state.
Scenario building	(Optional) For organizations interested in exploring new products, services, policy ideas, or business models that require multi-year planning and investments, Quantumrun encourages a process called scenario modeling. This method involves in-depth analysis and exploration of different market environments that may emerge over the coming five, 10, 20 years or longer. Understanding these future scenarios can provide organizations with greater confidence when planning strategic long-term investments. This stage is facilitated by the Quantumrun Foresight Platform.
Scanning	Collect information: Assess data collection strategy, isolate data collection mediums and sources, then collect relevant historical, contextual, and predictive data that applies directly and indirectly to the foresight project. This stage may be influenced by the scenario-building process. This stage is also facilitated by the Quantumrun Foresight Platform.
Trend Synthesis	By analyzing the insights identified from the scenario modeling and trend scanning steps, we proceed to look for patterns—the goal being to isolate and rank drivers (macro and micro) and trends by importance and uncertainty—that can guide the rest of the project. This stage is facilitated by the Quantumrun Foresight Platform.
Constraints	Understand the constraints all future scenarios and research must operate in, such as: budgets, timelines, legislation, environment, culture, stakeholders, human resources, organization, geopolitics, etc. The goal is to narrow the project's focus to those scenarios, trends, and insights that can offer clients the most value. This stage is facilitated by the Quantumrun Foresight Platform.
Option generation	Carefully evaluate the research to identify opportunities or potential threats the organization may face, and prioritize potential strategy options that require further analysis and development. This stage is facilitated by the Quantumrun Foresight Platform.
Ideation	Choose a preferred future: Prioritize the opportunities to pursue and threats to avoid. Identify potential products, services, policy ideas, and business models to invest in. This stage is facilitated by the Quantumrun Foresight Platform.
Management consulting	For the product or strategy being pursued: Research its potential market viability, market size, competitors, strategic partners or acquisition targets, technologies to buy or develop, etc.
Action	Implement the plan: Develop action agendas, institutionalize strategic thinking and intelligence systems, assign projects and deliverables, and communicate the results.

Disruption radar

Macro drivers, signals, and trends are the raw materials strategic foresight professionals use to construct compelling visions of the future that can help inspire present-day actions.
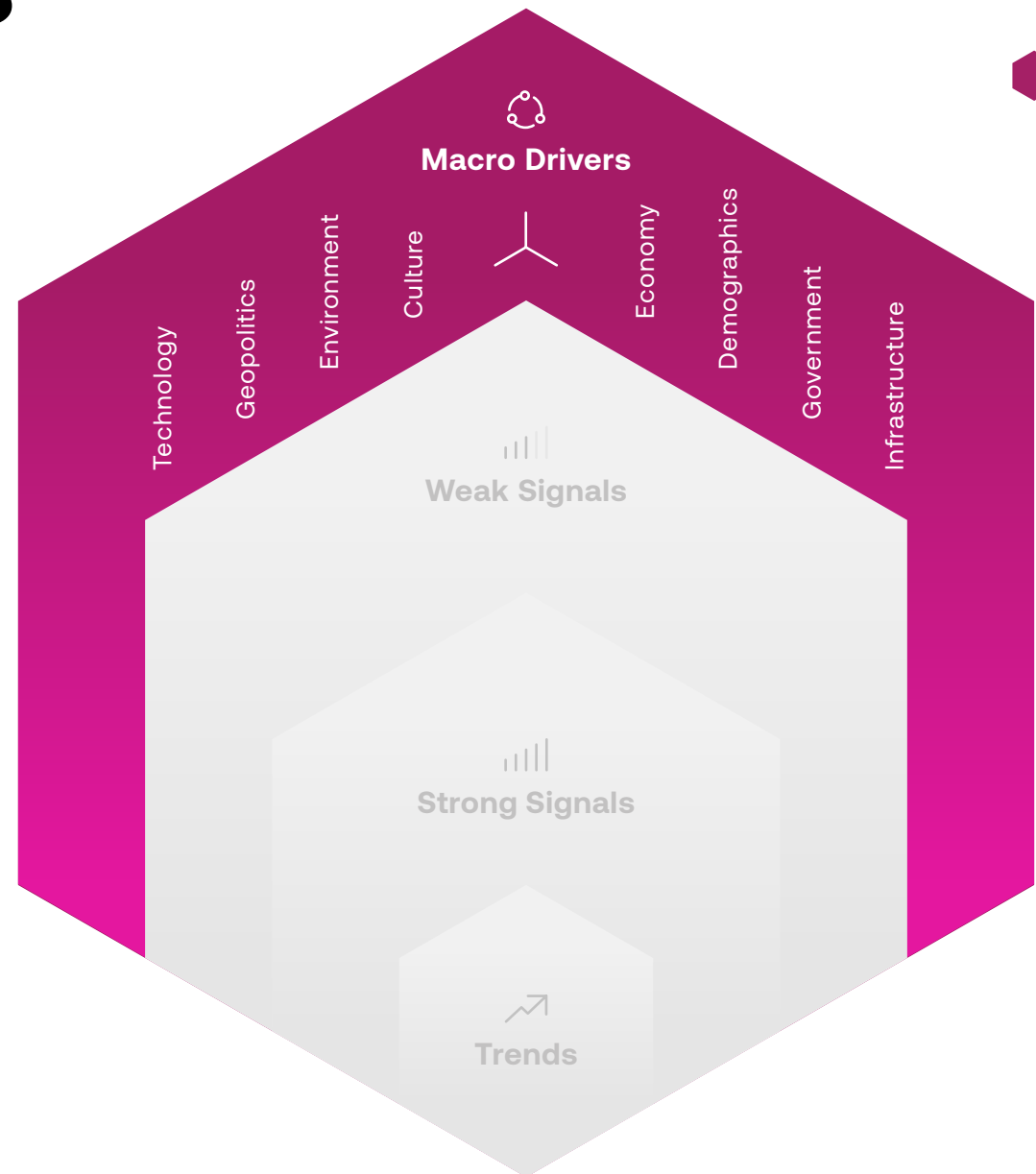
Macro Drivers

Technology · Geopolitics · Environment · Culture · Economy · Demographics · Government · Infrastructure

Weak Signals

Strong Signals

Trends

Macro drivers
(Disruption radar)

Quantumrun Foresight focuses on eight macro drivers that can impact business, government, and society. Sometimes called megatrends or macro forces, these macro drivers were inspired by the STEEPLED framework common within the strategic foresight community, but were adapted to Quantumrun's consultancy methods and real-world client considerations.

These drivers can have positive, neutral, or negative effects and are influenced by major sources of change. When considering the future of any topic, it is important to consider each potential area of disruption and take into account the diverse set of drivers from these macro influences to guide research and analysis.

Macro Drivers

Technology
Geopolitics
Environment
Culture
Economy
Demographics
Government
Infrastructure

Weak Signals

Strong Signals

Trends

Eight macro drivers

CULTURE

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that characterize a group or society. It encompasses the art, music, literature, and other intellectual and creative achievements of a society, as well as how people understand and interact with the world around them, shaping their experiences, behaviors, and perceptions. Culture can vary widely between different societies and can change over time within a society. In modern times, media and communications technologies play an outsized role in how society communicates, learns, and accesses information.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics refer to the statistical characteristics of a population, such as age, gender, income, education level, race, and ethnicity. Businesses, governments, and other organizations use demographics to study and understand the makeup and trends of a population, including birth/death rates, migration, and health metrics, to forecast future needs and develop strategies.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology refers to the tools, machines, systems, and processes used to achieve specific goals or tasks. It is constantly evolving as innovations are developed and can be applied to improve efficiency, solve problems, and enhance communication and other aspects of daily life. However, technologies of all kinds can result in negative outcomes if used improperly or without adequate consideration of potential consequences.
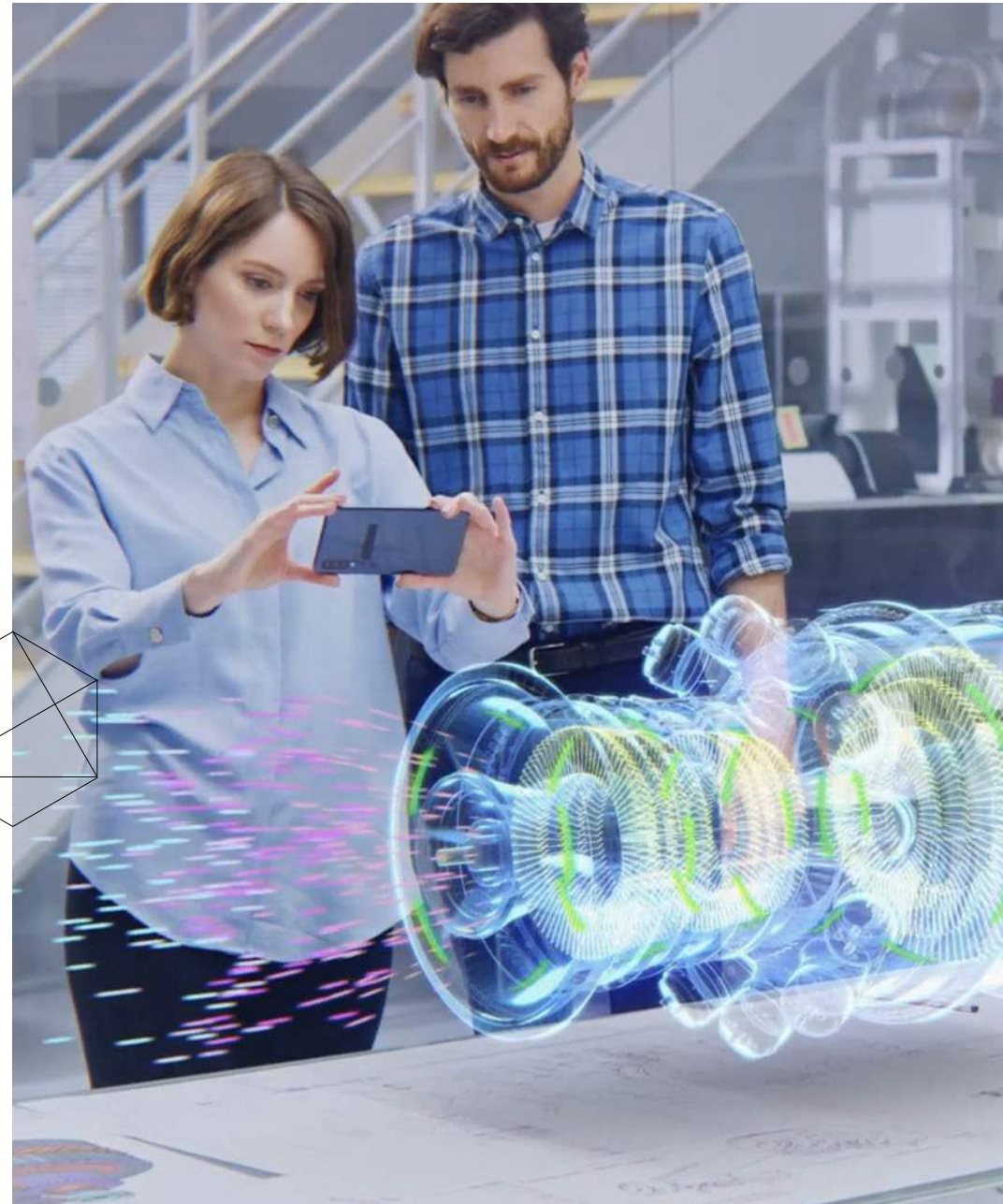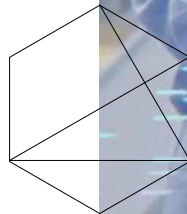
ENVIRONMENT

The environment refers to the natural world and the physical, chemical, and biological factors that affect an organism or ecosystem. It includes all living and non-living things and their interactions within an ecosystem, as well as the air, water, and soil that support life. The environment plays a critical role in supporting and sustaining life on Earth and is subject to change due to natural and human influences.

GOVERNMENT

Government refers to the political system, laws, and institutions that regulate and govern a society or country. It includes the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, as well as local and regional governments and their various agencies and departments. Depending on the form of government, these institutions may vary in their approach to creating and enforcing laws, providing public services, protecting citizens, and representing the rights and interests of the people.

GEOPOLITICS

Geopolitics is the study of how geography and politics interact to shape international relations and global events. It encompasses the political, economic, military, and cultural factors that influence the relationships between countries and other actors on the global stage. Geopolitics takes into account the physical features of a region, such as its natural resources, transportation networks, and strategic locations, as well as the political and economic systems, ideologies, and cultural values of the countries and peoples within the region.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure refers to the basic systems, structures, and facilities that are necessary for the functioning of a society or organization. It includes transportation networks, communication systems, healthcare networks, water and sewage systems, energy and power grids, and other physical structures and services that support the daily lives of people and the operation of businesses and other organizations.

ECONOMY

The economy is a system of macroeconomic and microeconomic factors by which a society or region organizes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, and the creation and use of money to facilitate these exchanges. The economy is a major factor in a society's overall well-being and can influence the standard of living and quality of life of its citizens.
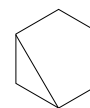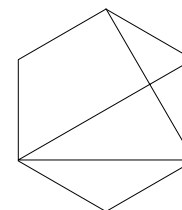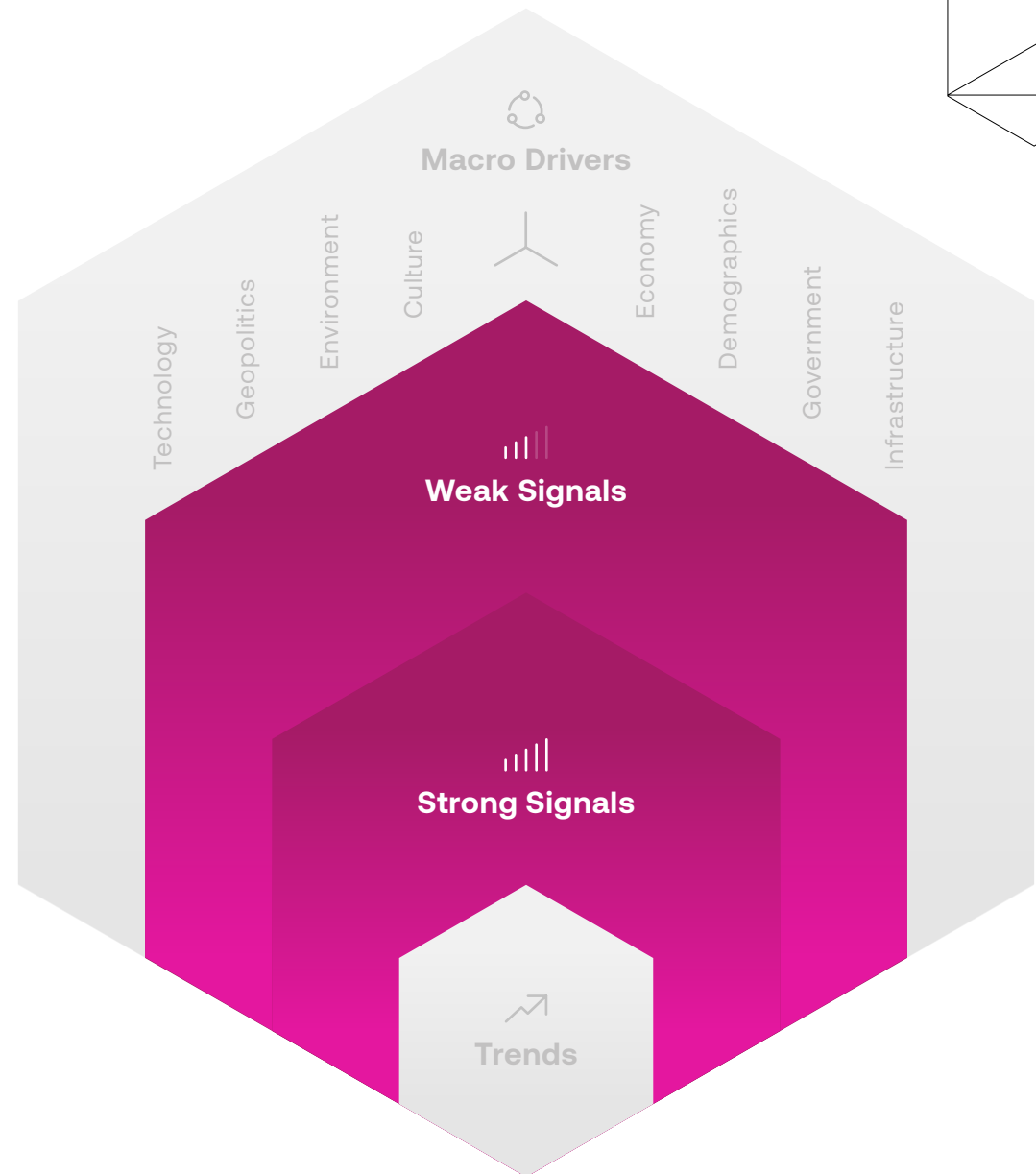
Signals
(Disruption radar)

Trend scanning. Horizon scanning. Environmental scanning. Signal collection. This foresight activity goes by many names. But whatever you call it, it is foundational to any innovation project.

The activity involves monitoring public information sources—including news publishers, industry journals, scientific papers, corporate newsrooms, subject matter expert blogs, etc.—to collect insights hinting at emerging trends that may reveal potential business opportunities or risks worth investigating.


Macro Drivers

Technology Geopolitics Environment Culture Economy Demographics Government Infrastructure

Weak Signals

Strong Signals

Trends

Weak signals refer to early indicators of potential changes or developments that may have an impact in the future. These may include:

• New products or services entering a noncompetitive market, or evidence of existing things becoming obsolete or novel things emerging.

• Recently uncovered problems or current situations that do not directly affect a specific business, but could potentially have an impact in the future.

• Small innovations or technological advancements that have the potential to grow and mature.

Strong signals refer to more established and significant indicators of potential changes or developments that are likely to have a greater impact. These may include:

• New products or services entering a competitive market, and factors that challenge current paradigms, beliefs or assumptions, and have the potential to grow or mature quickly.

• Early warning indicators that provide a clear indication of a potential change or development on the horizon.

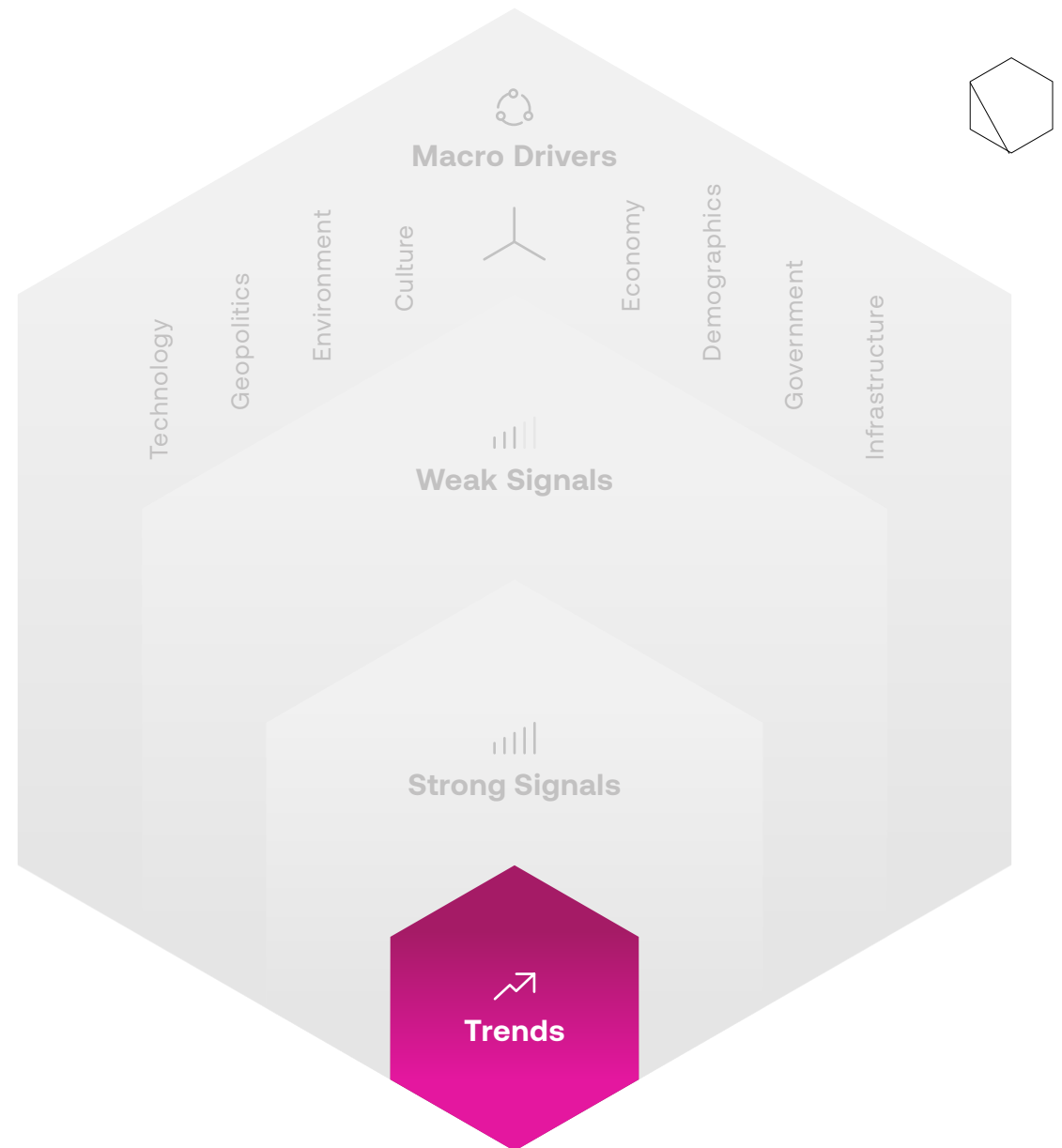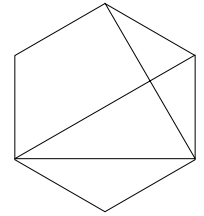• Significant innovations or technological advancements that are maturing.
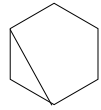
Trends
(Disruption radar)

Within the strategic foresight field, trends refer to patterns or directions of change that occur over time in a particular field or industry. These trends can be observed in various aspects of society, including technology, economics, politics, demographics, culture, and the environment. Trends can be positive, negative, or neutral in nature and can have varying degrees of impact on a society or organization.

Identifying trends through the analysis of macro drivers and signals helps professionals to anticipate and prepare for potential future developments and to make informed decisions about long-term plans and strategies.

Macro Drivers

Technology   Geopolitics   Environment   Culture   Economy   Demographics   Government   Infrastructure

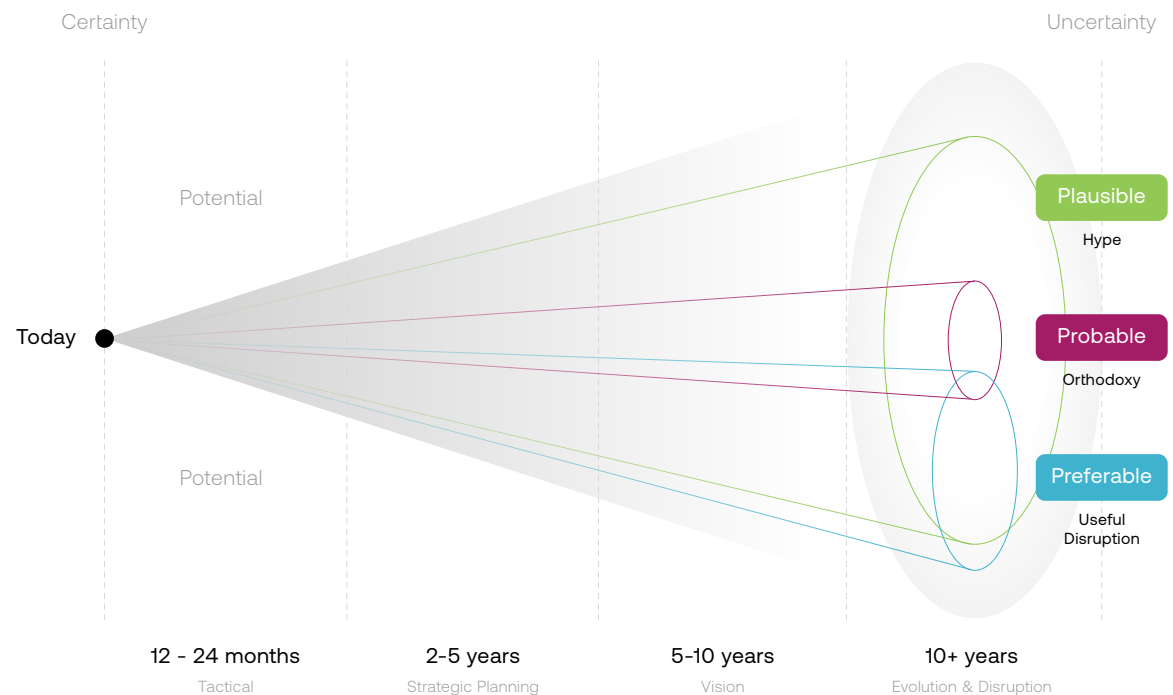Weak Signals

Strong Signals

Trends

Futures cone

The futures cone is a visual tool used in strategic foresight to help organizations understand and plan for the range of possible futures they may encounter and make informed decisions based on their level of risk tolerance and strategic goals.

This graphic highlights the concept of uncertainty, which refers to the inherent unpredictability of the future and the range of possible outcomes that could result from different combinations of factors and events. (The tool is also used to illustrate the utility of scenario modeling, to be described next.)

The futures cone is typically depicted as a pyramid, with the tip representing a more certain outcome and the base representing a greater level of uncertainty. Looking at the base, the low-uncertainty **(probable)** section represents relatively certain futures that are likely to occur based on current trends and knowledge. The medium-uncertainty section represents uncertain futures that are still **plausible** based on existing trends and potential disruptions. The outer ring represents the high-uncertainty futures that are less likely to occur but still **possible** given extreme or unforeseen events. Finally, the **preferable** section represents the future state the client can work toward with foresight-influenced strategic planning.

POTENTIAL FUTURES

Certainty

Uncertainty

Potential

Potential

Today

Plausible
Hype

Probable
Orthodoxy

Preferable
Useful Disruption

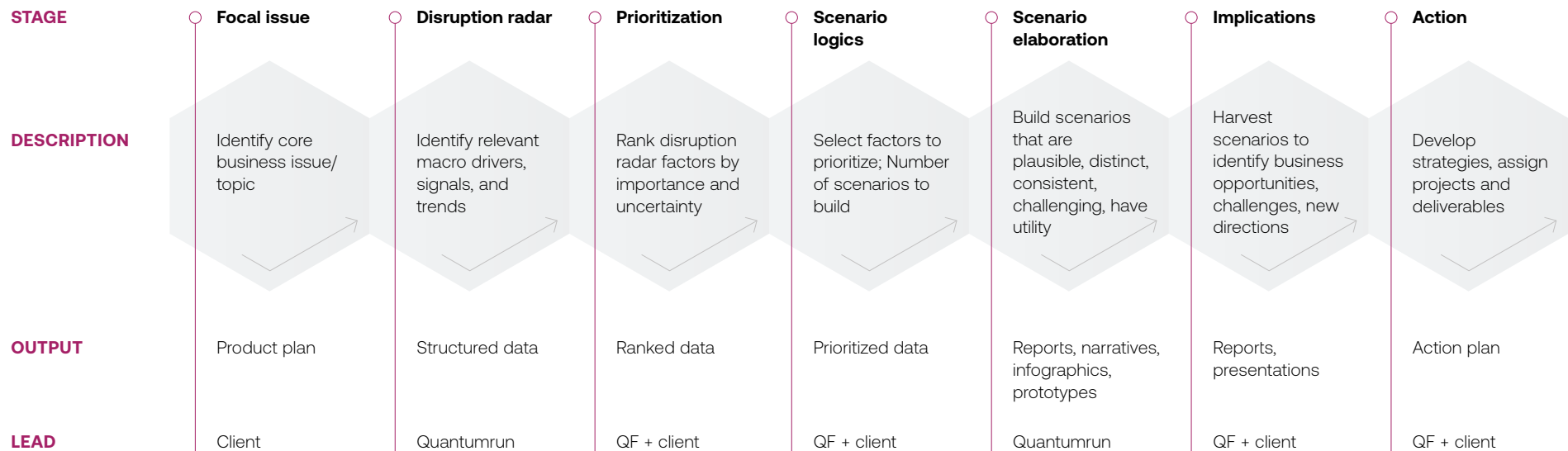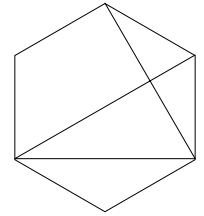| 12 - 24 months	2-5 years	5-10 years	10+ years
Tactical	Strategic Planning	Vision	Evolution & Disruption

Scenario modeling process

For organizations looking to address complex policy/legislation challenges or to explore new products, services, and business models that require multi-year planning and investments, Quantumrun Foresight encourages a process called "scenario modeling."

Borrowing from the concepts communicated in the futures cone, this method involves an in-depth analysis and exploration of different market environments that may emerge over the coming five, 10, 20 years, or longer. Understanding these future scenarios can provide organizations with greater confidence when planning strategic long-term investments.

The scenario modeling process usually involves multidisciplinary teams of both Quantumrun and client employees and follows this standardized approach:

STAGE	Focal issue	Disruption radar	Prioritization	Scenario logics	Scenario elaboration	Implications	Action
DESCRIPTION	Identify core business issue/ topic	Identify relevant macro drivers, signals, and trends	Rank disruption radar factors by importance and uncertainty	Select factors to prioritize; Number of scenarios to build	Build scenarios that are plausible, distinct, consistent, challenging, have utility	Harvest scenarios to identify business opportunities, challenges, new directions	Develop strategies, assign projects and deliverables
OUTPUT	Product plan	Structured data	Ranked data	Prioritized data	Reports, narratives, infographics, prototypes	Reports, presentations	Action plan
LEAD	Client	Quantumrun	QF + client	QF + client	Quantumrun	QF + client	QF + client

Quantumrun Foresight Platform

The Quantumrun Foresight Platform allows organizations to convert industry trends into practical insights. Invest in a foresight platform that lets your team outsource trend research, automate market analysis, and generate new business/policy ideas.

Common client types

Quantumrun's foresight platform is most often used by Strategy, Innovation, Product Development, Investor Research, and Consumer Insights departments that are new to foresight and looking for a tool to coordinate their trend-research activities.

Value proposition

• Supplement or delegate trend-specific research activities to reduce costs and admin time.

• Receive customized research daily, freeing worker time for higher-value tasks/projects.

• Access easy-to-use visualization tools to discover new trend insights and share your findings with other departments and management stakeholders.

• Reduce risk from outside disruption and lost revenue from missed market opportunities.

Quantumrun and the platform

Most clients new to foresight engage with Quantumrun first through its foresight platform. Then, once clients are ready or have the budget to explore more in-depth foresight services, they are introduced to Quantumrun's traditional consulting offerings.
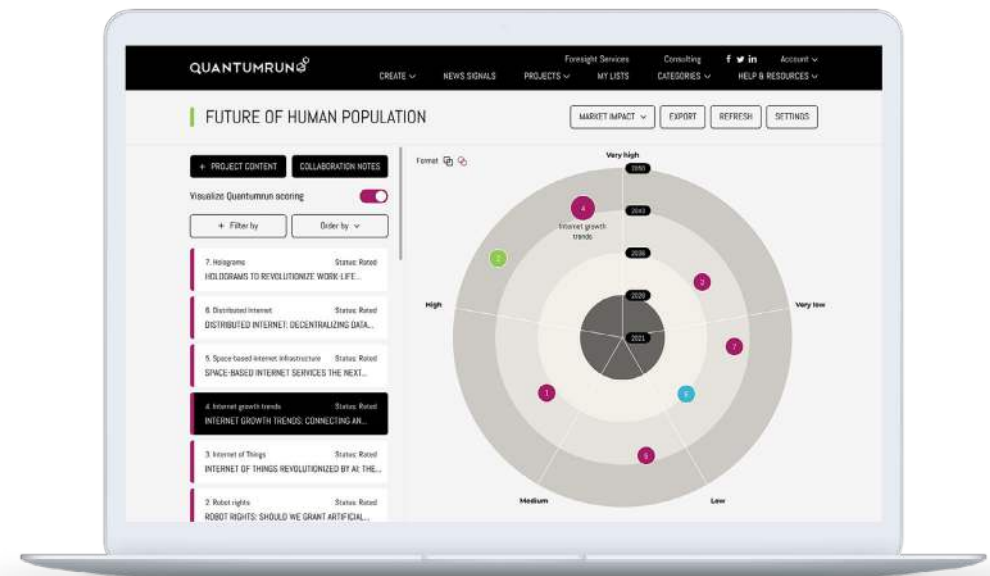
Platform AI news curation

Quantumrun Foresight's AI news aggregator helps clients simplify their day-to-day trend research activities. Key benefits include:

• Curate insights from millions of sources.

• Track industry trends more quickly using AI.

Diverse market intelligence options

Access news curation feeds that allow your team to track trends along the following verticals:

• Individual company news

• Competitor activity (product launches, partnerships, M&A, etc.)

• Related company lists OR industries

• Individual technologies

• Innovation and patent announcements

• Mega-trend tracking

• Regulatory changes

• Domestic politics OR geopolitics

Multiple feed options

Business subscriptions come with 10 curated news feeds. Enterprise subscriptions come with 30 feeds. Your team can assign these feeds by research topic or by team member.
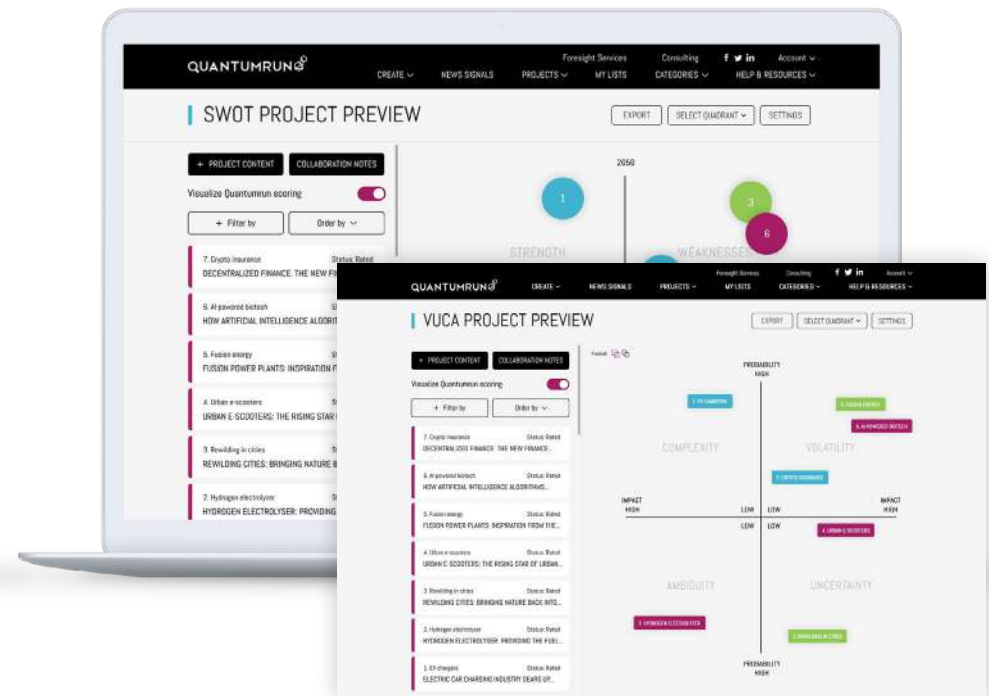
Platform trend visualization features
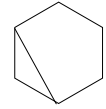
STRATEGY PLANNER

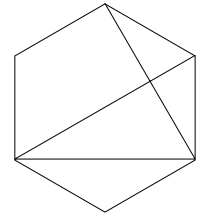Designed for strategy prioritization projects.
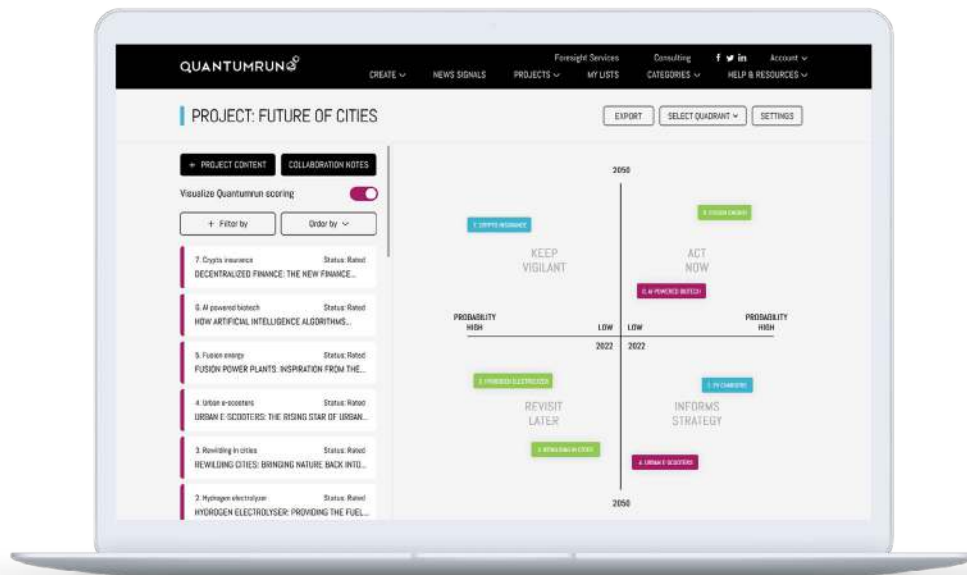
SWOT & VUCA

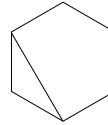Designed to integrate trend research into traditional management frameworks.
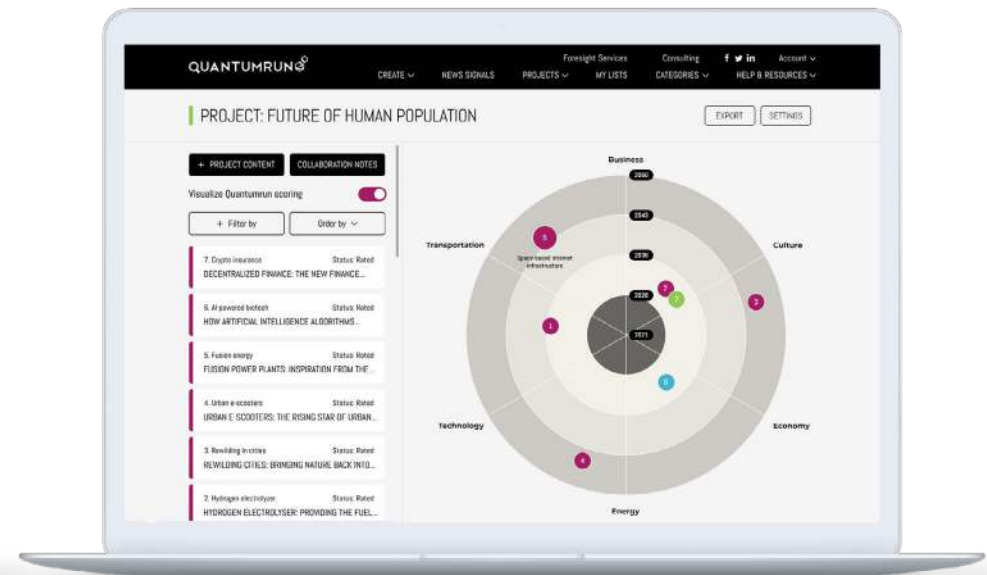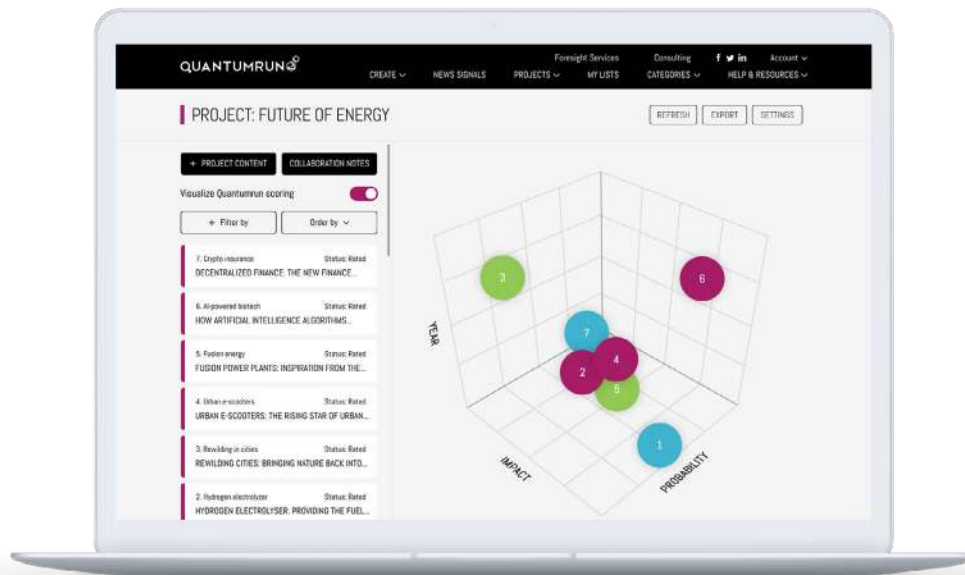
Platform trend visualization features

IDEATION ENGINE

Designed for brainstorming new products, services, policies, and business models.
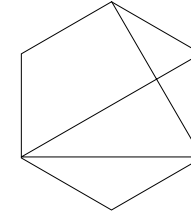
TREND RADAR

Designed to filter and segment trend research for scenario modeling exercises.

Advisory services

Apply strategic foresight inside your organization with confidence. Our Account Managers will guide your team through our list of services to help you achieve innovative business outcomes.

BUSINESS IDEATION
Apply trends research to develop ideas for new products, services, policy ideas, or business models.

SCENARIO MODELING
Apply scenario modeling to understand future market environments and execute multi-year planning and investments with confidence.

POLICY FORESIGHT
Generate future-proof policy ideas and legislation to support government services and political campaigns.

INTERNAL FORESIGHT DEPARTMENT
Build a best-in-class foresight department within your organization to guide innovation initiatives.

FORESIGHT RESEARCH SUPPORT
Receive daily, monthly or quarterly trend reports tailored to your team's research priorities.

TREND SCANNING
Outsource signal scanning, identify trends earlier, proactively prepare for and thrive in future market environments.

FUTURES CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS
Collaborate with our editorial team to produce forward-thinking branded content for your corporate blogs, newsletters, and promotional campaigns.

KEYNOTES & WORKSHOPS
Our global network of foresight speakers and instructors can train your employees to discover and capitalize on disruptive industry trends.
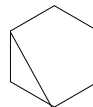
MARKET RESEARCH INTEGRATION
Combine Quantumrun's foresight insights with external market research services to integrate perspectives from a large and customizable pool of subject matter experts.
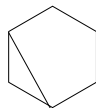
About Quantumrun Foresight

Quantumrun Foresight is a consulting and software firm that uses long-range strategic foresight to help corporations and government agencies thrive from future trends.
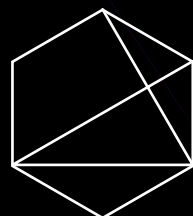
Since 2010, our foresight work has guided strategy, innovation, and R&D teams to stay ahead of disruptive market shifts, as well as generate innovative product, service, policy, and business model offerings.

Contact us

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